

CULTURALLY RELEVANT RECRUITMENT AND HIRING IN AN URBAN DISTRICT

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This qualitative case study examined the recruitment and hiring practices of an urban district. Participants in this study included five district-level, human resource staff members and six campus principals. Data collected and analyzed including audio recordings of semi-structured interviews of each participant and documents at the district and campus levels used during the recruitment and hiring processes. The findings suggested that there is evidence of the district's use of the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy, and there is potential value in uniting and using both theories to identify and hire culturally responsive teachers. Findings also suggested that some tenets of both theories overlap, and some were more evident and more valued in the district processes than others. Since urban schools tend to experience significant staffing challenges and require teachers who are more culturally responsive, this study has the potential to help district and campus leaders examine their current hiring practices and establish stronger connections to the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy tenets.

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By

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*Just don't give up on what you are trying to do. Where there is
love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong.*

Ella Fitzgerald

Tough. Challenging. Long. Tedious. Stressful. Rewarding. Fulfilling. These words describe my doctoral journey. On the very first night of class in 2014, my professor, Dr. Kevin Rogers gave advice that became my mantra. Dr. Rogers told me, “Perseverance. Perseverance is key. You just keep putting one foot in front of the other, and you will finish.” This mantra coupled with God’s grace, my family’s support and Dr. Miriam Ezzani kept me focused.

I want to give honor to God. Without Him, I am nothing, and this milestone would not be possible. I want to thank my family, my father and mother, Rex and Beverly Winn, my significant other, Kenzy and my children, Destiney and Aidan. I know that you all made many sacrifices. I want you all to know that I recognize and appreciate the love and patience that you showed throughout this process. Destiney and Aidan, you are my motivation. This degree is for you. I wanted to show you both what is possible with dedication, focus, drive and inspiration to others.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

America's classrooms continue to become more diverse; therefore, there is an increasing need for culturally competent educators to serve these diverse learners (Berry, 2008). Educators are responsible for reaching every single student, regardless of socioeconomic status, cultural background, ethnicity, preferred language, and learning level. Today's high-stakes testing and legislation [for more than a decade, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) passed in 2001 and most recently, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) passed in 2015] monitor how well a teacher accomplishes this task by analyzing the performance of each diverse student group. These laws focus on the idea that every child is entitled to learn and receive relevant instruction (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2012). The residual hope of these legislations is to improve the quality of education for all students by ensuring highly qualified teachers in classrooms, high academic expectations, and monitored student achievement results. However, despite the legislations' intent, the achievement gap for minority students continues to widen.

The growing achievement gap leaves district leaders across America searching for resources that would help meet students' needs (Cohen-Vogel, 2011). A primary resource is skilled teachers who can make a difference, yet often urban districts struggle to recruit and retain such highly effective teachers (Liu, Rosentein, Swan, & Khalil, 2008). Most urban districts and principals look for teachers who possess content knowledge, data analysis skills, classroom management skills, and relationship building skills (Cohen-Vogel, 2011). Research confirms that teachers and teaching quality are the most powerful school-level determinants of student achievement (Wong, 2004). Because teachers make the most difference in a student's education, district leaders and principals who recruit and train teachers are assured better student

achievement (Wong, 2004). Although the research literature is clear about teacher recruitment and training, some districts continue to struggle with implementing effective hiring practices and sound retention efforts (Jacob, 2007).

Districts utilize recruitment and hiring models to select viable teacher candidates who can support efforts to close the achievement gap. Because teacher recruitment and hiring are critical to the success of students and the overall culture and success of a school, the tasks must be well planned, implemented and strategically managed. Hatt and Maynes (2013) stated that hiring teachers is a high-stakes venture because, if a poor teacher is selected for hire, student learning is in danger and the ability to reach learning goals is diminished. Because student learning is constantly at the forefront of all decisions made, it is one of the driving forces in recruitment efforts.

Some districts assist teachers in developing essential skills through new teacher training initiatives and professional development opportunities. Some district supports include providing carefully selected mentors, ongoing professional development, and opportunities for collaboration (Wong, 2004). However, teachers do not often remain in the profession long enough for a district to reap the benefits of the training. High attrition rates negatively impact student achievement, especially in urban settings (Jacob, 2007). The failure to keep the best teachers employed also wreaks havoc on school district budgets, as districts spend an average of \$4,631 to \$12,652 to hire and train each new teacher (Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010). Nationally, the U.S. Department of Labor estimates that the cost of replacing teachers who exit the profession is an astounding \$2.2 billion per year (Watlington et al., 2010).

Problem Statement

With the task to educate an increasingly diverse student population, districts must ensure that teachers are selected and prepared to educate students in ways that are culturally responsive. It is becoming more important for teachers to serve as the bridge between the students' home community and the school culture (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2012). Teachers are responsible for providing curricular instruction and helping students find value in their own culture while learning. Perhaps with the high stakes responsibilities bestowed upon teachers, it is imperative now more than ever that the right teachers are recruited and trained. Teachers must possess the philosophy and internal desire to serve students of diverse backgrounds and ought to be provided professional development to ensure culturally relevant learning experiences for the students they teach. Much attention has focused on the role of hiring models, mentoring, and induction; however, there is a gap in the research related to recruitment and hiring of culturally responsive teachers. Existing research evaluates and cites the use of theories such as the fit theory or the professional shift theory in isolation (Hatt & Maynes, 2013). However, this study combined the fit theory and the tenets of the culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) into a conceptual framework used to examine recruitment and hiring of committed culturally responsive teachers in an urban school district.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study united concepts from both the fit theory (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005) and tenets from the culturally relevant pedagogy model (Ladson-Billings, 1994) to determine influence on recruitment and retention practices. The combination of these concepts was broadly based on the assumed importance of identifying

the best fit and recognizing that the best fit for an urban district may be a teacher who demonstrates the awareness, reflection, and methodologies of a teacher skilled in culturally relevant pedagogy (see Figure 1). Both constructs, the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy tenets, are briefly explained below and are explained in full detail in the literature review.

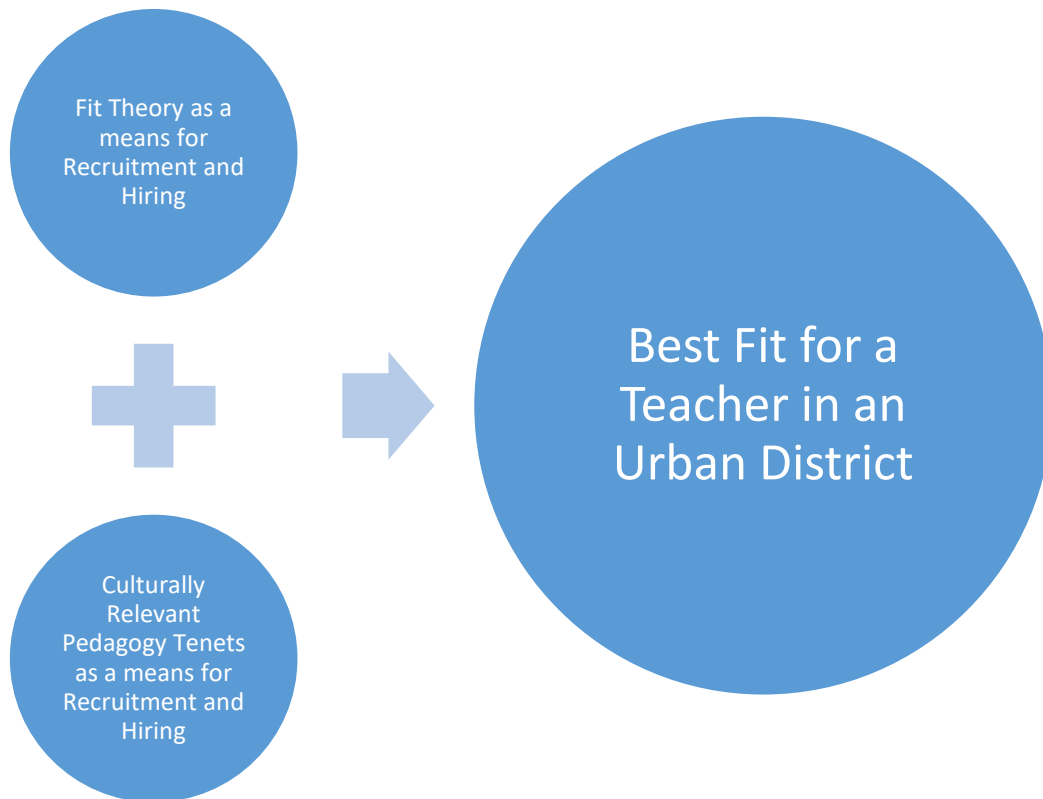


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for recruitment and hiring of urban district teachers. This framework illustrates the premise of this study, which is that when used together in recruitment, selection and hiring, the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy tenets may aid in identifying the best fit teacher for urban districts.

The Fit Theory

The first component of the conceptual framework, the fit theory, states that organizations base hiring on understanding how well the person will fit the organization's needs (Maynes & Hatt, 2015). Organizations evaluate a candidate based on different types of fit: person to

organization (P-O), person to job (P-J), person to environment (P-E), and person to group (P-G).

P-O fit is “the congruence of an individual’s beliefs and values with the culture, norms, and values of an organization” (Handler, 2004, para. 4). Evaluating a candidate’s P-O fit requires that the organization has clearly established and communicated values. While P-O is more subjective and more difficult to measure, an alignment of values between a candidate and an organization does lead to the candidate’s tenure with the organization (Handler, 2004). Handler also cited P-O fit as a determinant of job satisfaction and commitment to the organization.

P-J fit evaluates a candidate’s ability to successfully perform the demands of the job, based on the candidate’s skills, education level, knowledge, and abilities. Sekiguchi (2004) defined P-J fit as “the fit between the abilities of a person and the demands of a job or the desires of a person and the attributes of a job” (p. 182). P-J fit is determined based on an alignment of the job description and related duties and the candidate’s demonstration of the ability to perform these duties. Thus, common indicator of P-J fit are the outcomes of performance-based tasks that predict a candidate’s success at job-related tasks.

Most large organizations focus on P-O and P-J fit, but campus principals also focus on P-E and P-G fit. Principals have more knowledge about the dynamics and culture of the campus, so P-E and P-G fit are evaluated more critically at the campus level (Hatt & Maynes et al., 2013). Sekiguchi (2004) explained that “P-E fit is defined as the degree of congruence or match between personal and situational variables in producing significant selected outcomes” (p. 180). P-E fit evaluates how well a candidate matches with current employees in the organization. P-E fit also assesses whether the environment’s resources or lack of resources meet the needs of the candidate. Similarly, P-G fit focuses on interpersonal compatibility of the candidate and the future team (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Tenets of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The second component of the framework is culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). The three tenets of CRP are academic success/achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. Ladson-Billings (2014) explained the tenets of CRP in the following way:

By *academic success* I refer to the intellectual growth that students experience as a result of classroom instruction and learning experiences. *Cultural competence* refers to the ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture. *Sociopolitical consciousness* is the ability to take learning beyond the confines of the classroom using school knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems. (p. 75)

CRP seeks to educate culturally diverse students through the strengths found in their culture and experiences. CRP bridges a gap between the child's informal learning and school learning by facilitating academic success through a focus on identity, relevance, and achievement (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2012). When teachers possess a mindset that appreciates the students' culture and are willing to include students' culture in the instruction, engagement and achievement are positively impacted. Teachers must possess a desire to build their own cultural competence and sociopolitical consciousness in order to effectively teach students (Milner, 2011). Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2012) outlined five teaching principle themes of CRP teachers: a) identity and achievement, b) equity and excellence, c) developmental appropriateness, d) teaching the whole child, and e) student-teacher relationships. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper believe that working on a combination of these areas will create a CRP practitioner.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine an urban district's current recruitment and hiring practices to determine if the district's practices incorporate the fit theory and CRP tenets

into how teachers are recruited, identified and selected. This study also explored the perceived value of incorporating the fit theory and CRP tenets into recruitment and hiring practices.

Research Questions

This qualitative study used the culturally relevant pedagogy and fit theory conceptual framework to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the current recruitment and hiring practices established in one urban school district?
2. What role does the fit theory have in the district's recruitment and hiring practices?
3. What role do the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy have in the district's recruitment and hiring practices?
4. What is the perceived value of using the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy in recruitment and hiring practices?

Significance of the Study

The existing literature in the field recognizes the growing need for recruiting and retaining educators who understand and value diverse students (Ladson-Billings, 2005). The present study explores the ability of current district recruitment and hiring practices to meet the needs of students with diverse backgrounds. This study moved beyond only exploring the influence of the fit theory; however, the legitimacy and importance of the fit theory are not taken for granted. The current study adds to the current body of research because it examined both the fit theory and CRP to evaluate the role of these two frameworks in recruiting and hiring teachers in urban districts. In addition to utilizing the fit theory, the study provides suggestions for practitioners and policy makers to examine their practices to determine if their practices utilize any portion of the culturally relevant tenets. The results of this study offer practitioners and

policymakers ways to evaluate how important each of these theories are in serving diverse students. With this study, the lens of CRP is applied to a realm beyond just instruction. This study used CRP as a lens for initial recruitment and vetting of teachers. This framework further adds to the recruitment and retention literature because it examined best practices to better prepare teachers for teaching diverse students. Policy makers will be able to use the information presented in this study to establish new considerations and modifications to their recruitment and hiring practices. This study has implications that suggest restructuring learning opportunities provided to principals, as they relate to CRP tenets and fit theory to hiring practices.

The goal of this study was to identify the possibility that, when combined with CRP, the fit theory could be identified as a potential strategy against attrition. This study suggests districts go beyond merely hiring someone of a particular ethnicity because of the districts' demographics, but rather hiring someone who is a fit for the organization's vision and culture and who possesses the CRP tenets of high academic expectations, cultural competence, and a sociopolitical consciousness. This study calls for districts to evaluate their current practices to determine if there is an alignment between the fit theory and CRP tenets and provides a springboard for districts and educational leadership preparation programs to evaluate and possibly transform their selection models and training provided to principals about hiring teachers.

Delimitations

This study was conducted November 2017 through December 2017 in an urban district in the Central Texas region. The participants in this study included both centralized and decentralized employees. The criteria for selection included centralized employees who have

influence on the recruitment, selection models and hiring processes. The criteria for decentralized employees was that participants must be a current principal at a Title I school.

Limitations

One limitation of the study was contingent upon centralized and decentralized employees providing honest and transparent responses about the strengths and weaknesses of their respective recruitment and hiring processes. A related limitation was that participants would give honest responses, given my positionality in the district. To ensure that participants were as open and honest as possible, I reviewed the confidentiality of the study and assured the participants I was operating purely as a researcher.

Assumptions

One major assumption of this study is that districts are intuitively using elements of the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy. It is assumed that the selected district considers these research-based theories when hiring models are established. Another assumption is that the hiring practices of the six principals represent the practices of all principals of Title I schools in the district. Some of the hiring practices may be transferable and may represent patterns found within the district, but the practices are not generalizable. It is assumed that the participants answered the interview questions openly and honestly. Furthermore, it is assumed that the documents accurately represented the recruitment and hiring practices of the district.

Positionality

I have served as an educator, instructional coach, administrator and central staff manager

in an urban district for 14 years. During my employment in the district being researched, I served primarily Title I campuses. As a former administrator, finding and hiring teachers was a critical responsibility, and I view this task as vital to the success of the students and the school. My personal belief is that teachers make the most difference in helping to improve student achievement. I believe that a strong teacher and student connection is a critical factor in impacting student motivation and success. Therefore, I am strongly passionate about the content matter of this study. Currently, I serve as an employee of the district being researched. My current position in central office involves onboarding and retaining district employees. As I conducted this study, I was attentive and cautious of my beliefs, so I remained true to the data gathered from participants' responses, district documents, and the fit theory and the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Definitions of Terms

- Academic expectations. These are the standards that the teacher has for each student's success. Having high academic expectations is a CRP tenet (Ladson-Billings, 1995).
- A priori code. According to Stuckey (2015), a priori codes are predetermined or deductive codes. Stuckey states "Predetermined coding may be based on a previous coding dictionary from another researcher or key concepts in a theoretical construct. They may derive from the interview guide or list of research questions" (p. 8).
- Centralized. Cohen-Vogel (2011) states, "In districts with 'highly centralized' approaches, district officials oversee screening, selection, and assignment processes" (p. 485). One set of interviews in this study were conducted at the centralized level. For the context of this district, the term centralized means the district level. As used in this study, centralized refers

to the processes that are implemented from a more global perspective. These processes are applied to the overall hiring processes for the district, not just one particular campus.

- Cultural capital. According to Watson (2011), cultural capital refers to “sets of knowledge and skills valuable in a particular field or social setting” (p. 24).
- Cultural competence. For this study, cultural competence refers to the attitudes, beliefs and educational practices of a teacher who is responsible for teaching diverse students. Cultural competence refers to the teacher’s ability to be inclusive of all cultures and learn from the students’ cultural experiences. Culturally competent individuals display a high level of understanding of cultures different from their own (Ladson-Billings, 1995).
- Culturally relevant pedagogy. Culturally relevant pedagogy is the framework for providing instruction to students that values their cultural and life experiences. This framework focuses on three tenets: academic expectations, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. For the purposes of this study, this framework served as a tool to evaluate a district’s recruitment practices and hiring processes, such as applications, selection models, rubrics and participant’s answers (Ladson-Billings, 1995).
- Decentralized. Cohen-Vogel (2011) reports that “school districts with ‘highly decentralized’ approaches allow individual schools to accept applications and hire into open positions” This study also utilized decentralized interviews. Decentralized refers to the campus level processes that individual principals utilize. These processes are contextually campus based.
- Fit theory. The theory that bases hiring decisions on a person’s alignment with the ideals, culture, and goals of the organization. For this study, I focus on person-organization fit, person-job fit, person-group fit, and person-environment fit (Kristoff-Brown, 2005).
- Inductive coding. According to Hesse-Biber (2017), inductive coding requires the

researcher to become immersed in the data until patterns, themes, behaviors, and concepts are evident. Hesse-Biber describes inductive coding as “doing both analysis (discerning what the data say) and interpretation (what you think it means)” (p. 318). During this process, the researcher is constantly reaching interpretations from the data.

- Moderately centralized/moderately decentralized. According to Cohen-Vogel (2011), moderately centralized/moderately decentralized approaches allow “district officials to screen applicants, and school administrators, with or without teacher input, select from them” (p.485). For the context of district, this approach is used; therefore, both centralized staff and decentralized staff were interviewed.

- Recruitment. In the context of this district, recruitment refers to the process of actively seeking out, vetting, and acquiring teachers for the profession. Recruitment efforts may encompass, but are not limited to, job fairs, job postings, college visits, etc.

- Social capital. Jacob (2007) defines social capital as “informal connections between people that help a community monitor its children, provide positive role models, and give support to those in need” (p. 31).

- Sociopolitical consciousness. Sociopolitical consciousness is the awareness of inequity, racism and politically charged issues that students of various cultures may face (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

- Urban district. According to Jacob (2007), urban districts are described as a district that serves a diverse population of students in the inner-city or major metropolitan area. For the context of this study, the Texas Education Agency’s definition of urban districts is used.

According to the Texas Education Agency (2017), an urban district is:

Classified as major urban if: (a) it is located in a county with a population of at least 950,000; (b) its enrollment is the largest in the county or at least 70 percent of the largest

district enrollment in the county; and (c) at least 35 percent of enrolled students are economically disadvantaged. A student is reported as economically disadvantaged if he or she is eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program. (“District Type Glossary of Terms, 2015-2016, para. 1)

Organization of Study

This study is organized into five chapters, appendices, and references as follows. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature related to urban school challenges, the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy. Chapter 3 describes the research design and the methodology of the study. The method for participant selection and study instrumentation are outlined in Chapter 3 as well. An analysis of the data and study findings are described in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains the summary, conclusions and implications of the study. The study concludes with a bibliography and appendices.

Summary

This study examined the use of fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy in the process of teacher recruitment and hiring. The purpose of the study was to identify practices that are used in an urban district to improve teacher quality and lessen the attrition rate by recruiting and hiring CRT. The study evaluated whether the current processes are culturally relevant, and if these practices target the diverse populations. Through an examination of district data, centralized interviews and decentralized principal interviews, I gleaned information to determine the role of these theories. Areas for improvement were identified to enhance practices and policies for support and recruitment.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Stronge et al. (2008), “The purpose of teaching is learning and the purpose of schooling is to ensure that each new generation of students accumulates the knowledge and skills needed to meet the social, political, and economic demands of adulthood” (p. 181).

Though times and student populations are changing, educators and districts are still charged with fulfilling this purpose. According to Ladson-Billings (2005), “today’s schools are called on to serve a more ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse student population, representing about one third of the school population” (p. 229). School districts find themselves in a difficult position, as they are tasked with recruiting and retaining teachers who can serve the growing needs of today’s students. This study examined the approaches and challenges of one urban district to recruit and hire culturally responsive teachers who demonstrate the best fit for serving urban students. The purpose of this study also examined an urban district’s current recruitment and hiring practices to determine if the district’s practices incorporate the fit theory and CRP tenets into how teachers are recruited, identified and selected. It was also the purpose of this study to determine if the use of or failure to use these theories influences the ability of districts to recruit and hire culturally responsive teachers who are able to meet the learning needs of the diverse students.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a context that demonstrates the uniqueness of urban districts and the workforce needed. The chapter also explains how fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy tenets can be used as vetting, development, and retention tools. The beginning of the literature review focuses on general characteristics of urban school districts and urban educators to highlight the specific characteristics of these teachers. The unique contexts of

urban schools emphasize the importance and need for this study, which explores why it is critical for school districts to correctly identify teachers who exhibit that they are culturally relevant and a best fit for students. Finally, the literature review delves into the history, definition and tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and the fit theory, which serve as the conceptual framework that undergirds this study. In this section, scholarship on teacher behaviors and beliefs as they relate to CRP teachers are identified to demonstrate the critical need for highly effective teachers in urban school districts.

Urban School Challenges

Urban school districts face a variety of challenges. Some of these challenges stem from the circumstances of the school's community. According to Jacobs (2007), urban school educators have the unique "challenge of preparing students from disadvantaged neighborhoods to be productive citizens" (p. 130). Most urban school districts are located in large cities that are often plagued by high crime rates, high unemployment rates, and low social capital (Jacob, 2007). According to the Texas Education Agency (2017), an urban district is:

Classified as major urban if: (a) it is located in a county with a population of at least 950, 000; (b) its enrollment is the largest in the county or at least 70 percent of the largest district enrollment in the county; and (c) at least 35 percent of enrolled students are economically disadvantaged. A student is reported as economically disadvantaged if he or she is eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program. ("District Type Glossary of Terms, 2015-2016, para. 1)

Many urban schools are classified as Title I, based on the enrolled students who qualify for free or reduced meal programs. Title I schools often have many high needs students, but oftentimes these schools lack experienced and committed teachers. Bishop, Ingle and Rutledge (2011) stated that Title I schools tend to have more students from "low socioeconomic backgrounds, lower student achievement, higher numbers of novice teachers and higher teacher

rates of teacher attrition” (p. 597). Urban districts are often plagued by staffing shortages, and consequently, these districts have less qualified teachers. According to Jacob (2007), these teachers are less qualified than their suburban counterparts in term of experience, certification, and educational background. In an urban school district, the teacher shortage crisis takes on its own meaning. A teacher shortage in an urban district means the candidate pool does not have enough effective teachers who are skilled and certified. In addition to a shallow pool of candidates, teachers tend to leave urban schools at a higher rate. According to Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson (2005),

Schools with lower student achievement levels, higher poverty, higher rates of behavior problems, and more students of color have higher overall teacher mobility rates... Teachers who stay in teaching but change schools tend to move to schools with more wealth and/or fewer minority students. (p. 77)

O'Donovan (2011) adds to this education peril:

Pressures of poverty, lack of resources, bureaucratic inertia and whipsaw reform efforts create a revolving door of teachers that exacerbates the lack of achievement of students. The attrition rate is high in urban districts and creates unstable environments for students. The rate is as high as 50 percent in the first five years at high-poverty schools, including urban, suburban and rural, and about 20 percent in all urban schools. (p. 25)

Alonso, Anderson, Su, and Theoharis (2013) cite that urban school students in California are ten times more likely to have an uncertified teacher than their white counterparts, and in Texas, teachers at urban schools are more likely to have fewer years of education than suburban, majority white campuses. The result of this staffing crisis is less qualified teachers, uncertified teachers, and low-quality education for urban school students. This is a direct contradiction to the types of teachers needed to serve inner-city students.

Scholars argue that urban schools suffer from a wide array of problems. Among these problems are decaying facilities, limited curriculum resources, poor quality instructional materials, and larger class sizes (Alonso et al., 2009), all of which contribute to lower student

achievement scores and diminished organizational health. Brown, Anfara, and Roney (2004) attribute urban school problems such as “teacher efficacy, curriculum articulation, student expectations, collegiality, instructional leadership and institutional integrity” (p. 428) to deficiencies within technical, managerial, and institutional levels of the organization. Some of these problems are directly connected to the organizational health of urban schools, such as problems with “teacher efficacy, curriculum articulation, student expectations, collegiality, instructional leadership and institutional integrity” (p. 428).

Urban schools are also plagued by racial segregation and unequal funding (Jacob, 2007). In a study that compared high performing suburban schools and low performing urban schools, Brown et al. (2004) discovered the impacts of racial segregation and inequity on achievement. The study revealed:

A 400-point difference in average state test scores and an 85% difference in the percentage of low-income students are remarkable in and of itself. Factor in a 70% difference in the number of White, majority students, a 10-year difference in teachers’ years of experience and notable salary differentials, it’s no wonder we found the differences we did between HPS [High Performing Schools] and LPS [Low Performing Schools]. (p. 451)

Further, urban schools tend to receive fewer resources, with some of the wealthiest schools spending \$30,000 per student, while poor urban schools only spend \$3,000 per student (Alonso et al., 2009).

Urban school teachers must be ready to endure the operational struggles, but they must also be prepared to address the unique cultural and relational needs of urban school students. According to Matsko and Hammerness (2014), “Urban schools tend to serve concentrations of students whose experiences with and orientations toward schooling are often different from and sometimes in conflict with mainstream assumptions and attitudes toward schooling” (p. 129). Children in urban districts have unique needs that teachers must address, so hiring high-quality

teachers and hiring the right types of teachers are both critical approaches to assure student success. Urban school educators must be able to avoid focusing on “student lack,” but instead pay attention to “student strengths—resilience, eagerness, energy, and creativity” (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 231).

Oftentimes, “the knowledge and skills that students of color, those living in poverty, and English language learners possess are often seen as substandard or not as essential” (Milner, 2013, p. 6). This trend of devaluing students’ intellectual and social capital must be broken. Urban school educators must be thoughtful and strive to possess a deep knowledge of their students and their cultural backgrounds. These teachers understand that culture has an impact on learning, so they learn to tailor the curriculum to students’ experiences, interests, and cultures (Matsko et al., 2014). Watson (2011) explained the negative effects of not acknowledging students’ culture. Teachers’ failure to incorporate students’ cultures “can often lead to antagonism toward students of color, as teachers blame the children and their families for their own lack of success” (p. 33).

Watson (2011) argues that at the core, urban school teachers can identify their own implicit bias, understand privilege, and understand equity. Instead of labeling urban students as “low-skilled, unmotivated and needing gimmicky pedagogy,” urban educators seek ways to reach their students (p. 28). Matsko et al. (2014) added that they are also able to understand themselves in relation to their students and provide the following example of one teacher’s view of how building a relationship with students and communities impacts the ability to teach. “It made me realize how important it is to try to be a part of the community or try to understand where the kids are coming from, and really building a relationship with the parents and the community” (p. 134). Becoming a part of the community helps teachers to understand that

“there is a rich array of excellence, intellect, and talent among the people in urban environments—human capital that make meaningful contributions to the very fabric of the human condition in the United States and abroad” (Milner, 2012). The ability for educators to connect to students’ communities and view these communities as valuable is an important necessity. Urban school educators must be able to use their community connections and the knowledge that they acquire to tailor instruction to enable students to use their prior knowledge and backgrounds to construct meaning from the instruction.

Establishing connections is not the only challenge faced by urban school educators. It is not uncommon for urban schools to encounter constraints, such as inadequate resources, disproportionate numbers of special needs students, and limited teacher influence (Matsko et al., 2014). Despite these circumstances, it is an expectation that urban school teachers are “capable of functioning in this environment of urgency...and come away with a larger vision of what is possible” (p. 133).

Impact of Low Quality Education on Urban Student Achievement

Research continues to emerge regarding the impact of quality teachers on student achievement. Corbett and Wilson (2002) researched what students perceived as quality teaching and the impact on their learning. While students identified quality teaching traits such as the ability to maintain order, push students, help students, vary classroom activities, understand students and explain until everyone understands, not all students experienced this teaching quality. Corbett et al. (2002) states “it was not unusual for these students to spend a semester or an entire year in a core subject in which they learned nothing, most often because they experienced a revolving door of substitutes or a new teacher who was not equipped to meet the

challenges of an urban environment” (p. 21). Pulliam, LaCaria, Schoeneberger, Algozzine (2014) reported that some principals “expressed deep concern at the instructional climate that they had found at their school” (p. 591). They further stated:

One told of children in all grade levels coloring almost all day. Another told of teachers’ constant use of worksheets for instruction. Still another told of the practice of letting the students have “Freedom Friday” where they watched movies and played games all day if they had behaved and had done their work Monday through Thursday. (p. 591)

Stronge et al. (2008) argued that teachers who provide high quality instruction are the “primary catalyst for improvement in our schools” (p. 167). However, traditionally underserved, low-achieving urban school students are instructed by less effective teachers and have less access to rigorous curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Stronge et al. (2008) reported that the students who have the most deficiencies are taught by the least capable teachers. In another study of effective versus less effective teachers, Stronge, Ward and Grant (2011), found that end-of-course fifth-grade reading and math scores were lower for students taught by lower-performing teachers. They reported:

Students taught by bottom-quartile teachers could expect to score, on average, at the 21st percentile on the state’s reading assessment, whereas students taught by the top-quartile teachers could expect to score at approximately the 54th percentile. This difference, more than 30 percentile points, can be attributed to the quality of teaching occurring in the classrooms during one academic year. We found similar results for mathematics, with a difference in gain scores of 0.45 standard deviations. When translated into percentile scores, the students in the bottom-quartile teachers’ classrooms scored, on average at the 38th percentile; students in the top-quartile teachers’ classroom scored at the 70th percentile. This translates into more than a 30-percentile difference in achievement based on one year’s teaching and learning experiences. (p. 345)

Sanders and Horn (1998) found teacher effectiveness to be a strong factor that affects student academic gains. Sanders and Rivers’ (1996) research indicated that students assigned to ineffective teachers perform at lower performance rates, even if these students are assigned to effective teachers in subsequent years. “The residual effects of relatively ineffective teacher

from prior years can be measured in subsequent achievement scores” (Sanders et al., 1996, p.4). According to Sanders and Horn (1998), ineffective teachers were ineffective with all students, regardless of other factors. Stronge et al. (2008) reported similar results from a study in an urban district located in Texas, which showed that “if a student has a high performing teacher for just one year, the student will remain ahead of peers for at least the next few years of schooling” (p. 168). On the other hand, if a student has an ineffective teacher for one year, it can take the student nearly three years before meeting grade level expectations again. Palardy and Rumberger’s (2008) study of first grade students lead to the conclusion that “a string of highly effective or ineffective teachers will have an enormous impact on a child’s learning trajectory during the course of grades K-12” (p. 127). In addition to noticing the effects of poor quality instruction, Palardy et al.’s research established a connection between student achievement and low expectations; if a teacher had low expectations, then student achievement was lower. In addition to low expectations, lower performing teachers also encountered more classroom disruptions (Stronge et al. 2011).

The impact of low quality instruction commonly leads to an increase in the gaps that occur in the educational field. Ladson-Billings (2006) describes the disparities between the achievement amongst different groups of students. These disparities include that African-American and Latino students score lower than White students on standardized tests. Ladson-Billings (2006) also noted that there is a disparity between the scores of lower socio-economic students and higher socio-economic students. Also, a difference was cited between English as a Second Language student and native English speakers. Ladson-Billings (2006) believes the education debt plaguing urban students can be attributed to the poor educational services that they have received. Irvine (2010) concurs with Ladson-Billings (2006) and Milner (2013) as

well as other urban student advocates that the current disparities in education are a result of several reasons, such as:

The teacher quality gap; the teacher training gap; the challenging curriculum gap; the school funding gap; the digital divide gap; the wealth and income gap; the employment opportunity gap; the affordable housing gap; the health care gap; the nutrition gap; the school integration gap; and the quality childcare gap. (p. xii)

With the aforementioned gaps looming and negatively impacting student achievement, it is critical that highly qualified and dedicated teachers are placed in urban schools, where inequitable opportunities sometimes exist.

A lack of quality teachers and instruction stifles student progression and widens the achievement gap, but it can also lead to students choosing to drop out. Khalifa (2013) states, “School cultures and educators’ practice can be so marginalizing to student that they often drop out of school” (p. 65). Some high school dropouts who were previously high-performing students state “that their classes had failed to impart skills or interest them...In fact, two-thirds asserted that they would have worked harder if more had been demanding of them” (Alonso et al., 2009, p. 5). Teachers who teach in urban setting must realize the impact that their instruction has on students’ futures. The studies referenced above speak to the importance of ensuring that the right teacher is providing effective instruction to students in urban school environments.

The existing literature offers a portrait of the hardships faced by urban school districts and the educators required to mitigate such challenges. The literature also suggests the type of grit, competence, and belief systems that an urban school educator should possess (Ladson-Billings, 1995). But many districts are left with the following question: How do we find, screen, select and train the teachers who can be the most connected and equipped for success in urban education? As districts contemplate this daunting question, it is important to note that business human resource professionals also seek the answer to this question as they search for candidates.

School districts might consider application of the same fit theory model used by business human resources personnel, which includes evaluating individuals for skills, ability, alignment to company vision and cultural fit (Rouen, 2011).

Most districts, including the district in this study, employ a “decentralized or moderately decentralized hiring” process (Liu & Johnson, 2006, p. 332). This means that the central office recruits candidates, collects application materials, and funnels these candidates to principals who oversee hiring for their respective campuses. So, the onus of finding the right fit belongs to both central staff and the principal. According to Stronge (2011), “If an administrator seeks to hire effective, or, at least, promising teachers, for example, she or he needs to understand what characterizes them” (p. 339).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework, the fit theory and the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy, as depicted in chapter one and explained below, could be potential tools to aid districts in pursuing the right teacher for urban settings. The fit theory (Kristoff-Brown, 2005) bases hiring decisions on a person’s alignment with the ideals, culture, and goals of the organization. The fit theory includes evaluating a candidate’s person-organization fit, person-job fit, person-group fit, and person-environment fit. Culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994) is the framework for providing instruction to students that values their cultural and life experiences. This framework focuses on three tenets: academic expectations, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness.

The Fit Theory

According to the fit theory framework, there are four major types of fit: person-job (P-J), person-organization (P-O), person-group (P-G), and person-environment (P-E).

Person-Job Fit

Person-job (P-J) fit is traditionally the grounds for any selection criteria. P-J fit focuses on whether a candidate possesses the skills, abilities, and credentials to do the job at hand (Sekiguchi, 2004). The evolution of P-J fit begins with a job description that outlines the demands of the job and skills necessary to successfully fulfill job requirements (Sekiguchi, 2004). Sekiguchi defined P-J fit as “the fit between the abilities of a person and the demands of a job or the desires of a person and the attributes of a job” (p. 184). P-J merely answers the following question: Does the candidate have the skills, knowledge, and abilities to accomplish the job requirements? P-J fit is typically assessed based on how the candidate appears on paper. Determining P-J fit includes evaluating resumes, tests, interviews, and reference checks. The P-J fit document analysis enables HR personnel to scrutinize candidates to ensure that basic requirements related to education, experience and aptitude are met (Sekiguchi, 2004).

The effectiveness of how an organization delineates required job demands and tasks within posted job descriptions impacts the P-J fit success because applicants self-select based upon their perceived ability to perform the job. Current literature attributes the following positive outcomes to P-J fit: “job satisfaction, low job stress, motivation, performance, attendance and retention as outcomes” (Sekiguchi, 2004, p.184).

Person-Organization Fit

The P-O fit seeks to determine if a candidate is compatible with the cultures and values that serve as the organization's foundation. P-O fit is heavily rooted in Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) framework. The premise behind the ASA framework is that candidates are drawn to an organization, selected to be a member of the organization, and retained by the organization if the P-O fit is right. P-O fit is based upon the similarities between the candidate and the organization, and P-O fit helps candidates "attempt to assess the degree of alignment between their values and the values of the company" (Ellis, Skidmore, & Combs, 2017, p. 453). This congruence is important because essentially candidates contribute to the organizational culture.

Sekiguchi (2004) explained that operationalizing P-O fit is contingent upon four types of congruence to measure similarity between the candidate and the organization. The first congruence used to measure P-O is between the individual and the organizational values. The second congruence is the fit between the goal congruence of the leaders and the individual. The third P-O fit measure is the similarity between individual preferences and needs and organizational structures. The last P-O measure is the congruence between the candidate's personality and the organizational climate. P-O fit is critical in determining a candidate's potential commitment, job satisfaction, and intention to quit.

Person to Group Fit

According to Bishop et al. (2011), "P-G fit is a variation on the P-O theme that focuses on the fit with the smaller group of workers with which the employee will most closely interact" (p. 584). P-G fit is highly identified as a factor for success during the post-hire stage. P-G fit is

based on the idea that many employment positions require interpersonal interactions with group members. Werbel (2001) explained the importance of a candidate's P-G fit to the overall organization by stating the following:

A newcomer's or an existing employee's ability to develop and support quality interpersonal interactions affects his/her abilities to make distinctive contributions to the work unit. Quality interactions are important because they enhance the performance of other group members whose job performance is partially dependent on the newcomer's abilities to effectively interact with them. (p. 229)

P-G fit ensures both complementary and supplementary fit. Complementary P-G fit ensures that candidates share similar qualities with group members. Supplementary P-G fit ensures that the candidate possesses unique characteristics that could complement another group member's weaknesses. Evaluating a candidate's P-G fit helps to make certain that candidates will add value to the group. P-G fit also provides a safeguard against group dysfunction and lack of cohesiveness (Werbel et al., 2001).

Person to Environment Fit

"P-E fit is defined as the degree of congruence or match between personal and situational variables in producing significant selected outcomes" (Sekiguchi, 2004, p. 180). Existing literature has long debated whether the situation determines human behavior or whether personal characteristics are responsible for behavior. Researchers define environment in terms of the people who make up the environment and the demands of the environment. Resources provided by the environment also must be considered in establishing a P-E fit. To determine P-E fit, the candidate's ability to contribute to meet the environmental demands and make meaningful contributions must be assessed.

P-E fit is one of the most complex constructs of the fit theory. P-E fit involves supplementary, complementary, perceived, and actual fit. Supplementary P-E fit occurs when a candidate's characteristics are similar to other individuals in the environment. Complementary P-E fit is based upon offsetting relevant characteristics between the person and the environment (Sekiguchi, 2004). Perceived fit is a subjective judgement of whether a candidate will fit in with the environment. Perceived fit is typically based on characteristics revealed through conversation with a candidate. An actual fit is an objective fit determined by "the comparison between separately rated individual and environmental characteristics" (p. 181).

Fit Theory in the Education Field

The current literature indicates that "P-O and P-J fits have been the most studied in the context of employee selection, but the P-G fit may be of greater importance in the post-hire stage of the employment process" (Bishop et al., 2011, p. 584). Most district central offices are mainly concerned with P-J fit. Legislation such as NCLB and ESSA govern the P-J fit focus of central offices, as central offices attempt to ascertain candidates' certification status early in the recruitment process (Liu et al., 2008). As most central office personnel examine a candidate's credentials, principals more closely examine candidates' characteristics and competencies to predict job performance. Because principals are a part of their respective school's culture, the application of the fit theory is more complex.

The principal takes into account multiple components of the fit theory as they select candidates. When selecting the best fit candidate, principals tend to more critically examine P-E and P-G. Principals examine characteristics such as level of content knowledge, motivation, and willingness to go the extra mile for students. Principals use the context of their schools,

composition of teams, and overall goals to determine fit, knowing that teacher quality translates into better student achievement. Thus, P-O fit is used to determine a candidate's alignment with the school's student achievement goals. The collaboration that occurs on teacher teams is important and using P-G fit to determine a candidate's willingness to collaborate and to be cooperative is vital in the selection process. According to Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, and Ingle (2008), principals "mix and match teacher characteristics to fill important racial and gender diversity, as well as skill, and to ensure that teacher candidates fit the cultural norms and values of the school as an organization" (p. 255). Engel et al. (2015) reported that some principals use a distributed leadership hiring process, which allows for department chairs and teachers to participate in hiring potential candidates. Engel et al. summarized principals' belief that "since their teachers will work directly with the new hire, it is important for them to feel comfortable with a candidate" (p. 32). One principal echoed the importance of soliciting and valuing input of teachers during the hiring process by stating, "I may think they're great, but I mean, I'm not going to work with them" (p. 32). Principals do not completely mitigate the P-J fit but consider it when focusing on a candidate's ability to perform in the classroom.

As applicants are screened, a process that mainly occurs before principals are involved, some districts seek to align their selection processes to district expectations of teacher excellence (O'Donovan, 2011). Recent literature indicates that districts are beginning to incorporate other fit components into hiring models to aid in identifying the right teacher. In an effort to expand the scope of hiring models and talent matching abilities, some districts have begun to utilize selection tools that measure teacher disposition, attitudes and behaviors (O'Donovan, 2012). The Gallup Organization's TeacherInsight tool is a common tool used by districts. The

TeacherInsight tool seeks to assess characteristics, such as teaching mission, goals, thoughts about students and relationships with students (Evans, 2016).

Haberman's Star Teacher pre-screener (Hartlep & McCubbins, 2013) also seeks to identify the best teachers for P-E fit. The Star Teacher Selection Interview seeks to identify 'Star' teachers, those who are the best for urban school environments. According to O'Donovan (2011), Haberman differentiates 'Star' teachers, "teachers who believe all students can learn" from 'Quitters,' those "who leave urban schools, not because they don't have adequate teaching skills or lack content knowledge, but rather that the challenges of the urban setting are a continuous drain on their commitment" (p. 25). O'Donovan sums up Haberman's beliefs about quitters by stating that "Quitters cannot reach diverse children in urban poverty because, at bottom, they do not respect and care enough about them to want to be their teachers. The students sense this and respond in kind by not wanting them to be their teachers" (p. 25). Houston Independent School District, an urban school district, brought Haberman to speak about teacher fit and the utilization of The Star Teacher Selection Tool in 2009. The message was clear, P-E fit was important because there are some characteristics that a teacher must have to serve in an urban environment, and some traits cannot be taught. O'Donovan (2011) quotes the Houston ISD superintendent, Terry Grier, as saying "They can't instill empathy or the idea that high expectations for student learning are possible, or that you get nowhere by blaming a student's background for his or her lack of success in school" (p. 26).

The use of selection tools to better assess fit and vet for skills that cannot be taught are also beneficial in determining the teaching life expectancy of a teacher and the likelihood of burnout. P-E fit has been used as a framework that can be used to address whether a teacher will exit the profession due to work-related stress (Pyhalto, Pietarinen, Salmela-Aro, 2011).

According to Pyhalto et al. (2011), “The basic idea of a dynamic employee-working-environment fit is that a poor fit increases the risk for burnout, while a good fit is likely to promote job satisfaction, engagement and a positive work drive” (p. 1102). Furthermore, a misfit can negatively impact teacher well-being, commitment and performance. Teachers who experience a misfit often have feelings of inadequacy and alienation. Common urban school characteristics such as “high demands—low resources” is one determining factor for burnout (p. 1103).

In their study, Pyhalto et al. (2011) determined, even though teachers progress towards burnout, “teacher’s perceived lack of emotional energy, feelings of insufficient competence or distant and acerbic attitude towards the students, parents or colleagues are constructed horizontally in schools’ everyday practices” (p. 1108). Accurately assessing a teachers P-E fit includes assessing dynamics such as relational dynamics between students, families, the school community and professional communities. P-E fit assessments also include evaluating a teacher’s personal competences, environmental requirements, a teacher’s efforts and abilities, and environmental resources or lack of resources. Some principals reported that hiring student teachers and substitutes who were familiar with their campus allowed for vetting and resulted in an optimal hire that was a good fit (Engel et al., 2015). The ability to accurately assess a teacher for P-E fit during the recruitment and hiring process may positively impact a district’s teacher turnover rate.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

District human resource hiring complexities include more than just evaluating for fit. Districts are responsible for identifying highly qualified teachers, as well as teachers who can

bridge cultural gaps with students. Screening for culturally relevant candidates requires districts to clarify misunderstandings about what culturally relevant pedagogy is not. Culturally relevant pedagogy is not a “feel good curriculum” (Irvine, 2010, p. 58). CRP extends beyond “simply acknowledging ethnic holidays, including popular culture in the curriculum, or adopting colloquial speech” (p. 58). Before seeking CRP candidates, districts must dispel the myth that only teachers of color can be competent in CRP. Instead, districts must gain an understanding of how Gloria Ladson Billings defines culturally relevant pedagogy and the associated teacher behaviors. In the landmark *Dreamkeepers* study of teachers who demonstrated CRP qualities, Ladson-Billings (1994) defined culturally relevant pedagogy as pedagogy that “not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools and other institutions perpetuate (p.469). Khalifa, M., Gooden, M., & Davis, J. (2016) state, “Inclusiveness and exclusiveness are at the center of culturally relevant teaching; culturally responsive teachers not only center students’ cultural norms but also their very beings, proclivities, languages, understandings, interests, families, and spaces” (p. 1288).

Ladson- Billings’ (1992, 1994, 1995) seminal work contributes to the large body of research about responding to the cultural needs of students. Culturally relevant pedagogy is based upon findings from prior research. Ladson-Billings (1995) provided the genesis for the term culturally relevant pedagogy in her article, “Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.” The first emergence of any reference to culture and instruction was the term *culturally appropriate*, which was coined by Au and Jordan in 1981, as they studied teachers in Hawaiian schools. The teachers highlighted in the Au and Jordan (1981) study used the language style of Native Hawaiian students to improve standardized test achievement.

Mohatt and Erickson (1982) conducted similar work that resulted in instruction termed *culturally congruent*. In this study, Mohatt and Erickson (1982) studied teachers who utilized students' home cultural patterns to improve student academic performance. Erickson and Mohatt's research, along with Cazden and Leggett (1981), contributed to the birth of the term *culturally responsive*, which is instruction that matches educational practices with children's culture. Vogt, Jordan and Tharp (1987) used the term *culturally compatible* to describe the strategies of teachers who used linguistic compatibilities to lead to student success. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), the terms culturally appropriate, culturally congruent, and culturally compatible "seem to connote accommodation of student culture to mainstream culture" (p. 467), thus producing more inequalities. But, the term culturally responsive refers to "a more dynamic or synergistic relationship between home/community culture and school culture" (p. 467).

As the research about cultural and school connections continued to advance, Irvine (1990) developed the concept of *cultural synchronization*. Cultural synchronization refers to interpersonal context that must exist to maximize African-American student learning. According to Ladson-Billings, "Irvine's work on African-American students and school failure considers both micro- and macro-analyses, including: teacher-student interpersonal contexts, teacher and student expectations, institutional contexts, and the societal context" (p. 469). In the early 2000s, Gay (2010) contributed to the existing cultural education work with her body of work about culturally responsive teaching. Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive teaching as "using the culturally knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31). In Gay's vision of culturally relevant teaching, "opportunities must be provided for students from different ethnic backgrounds to have free personal and cultural expression so that

their voices and experiences can be incorporated into teaching and learning processes on a regular basis” (p. 43). Ladson-Billings’ culturally relevant pedagogy expands on the implications related to the work of connecting instruction to the culture and lives of students.

During the 1990s, Ladson-Billings (1994) coined the term culturally relevant pedagogy. CRP continues to be the topic of many literature reviews and is continuously transforming and adjusting as new findings emerge. Existing literature has defined CRP as the following:

...a means to use students’ cultures and strengths to bridge school achievement, to validate students’ life experiences by utilizing their cultures and histories as teaching resources, and to recognize students’ home cultures, promote collaboration among peers, hold high standards, and connect home life with school experiences. (Young, 2010, p. 249)

These interpretations seem to align with Ladson-Billings’ (1992) original CRP work. According to Young (2010), “Cultural relevancy to Ladson-Billings was more about establishing a culture of high expectations, creating a community of learners, and critiquing knowledge as a socially constructed concept” (p. 253).

Durden (2015) argues that “to effectively implement a culturally relevant and sustainable pedagogy, teachers must first believe that all students can succeed, maintain an affirming student teacher relationship and see excellence as a complex standard that takes student diversity and individual differences into account” (p. 224). Successful CRP teaching is contingent upon the teacher’s willingness to become self-aware and culturally aware and to understand how his or her identity impacts instructional practices (Maye & Day, 2012). Young (2010) refers to Ladson-Billings’ (1994) theoretical underpinnings claiming that they determine how teachers become skilled at delivering CRP. Those theoretical underpinnings include the following: concept of self and others, social relations, and concept of knowledge.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Ladson-Billings' theoretical underpinnings, concept of self and others, social relations, and concept of knowledge, are listed here.

The Concept of Self and Others

The concept of self and others speaks specifically to teachers becoming aware of privilege and their own backgrounds as they relate to the backgrounds of their students. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), CRP teachers believe all students can achieve academic success. Ladson-Billings points out that CRP teachers do not allow students to choose failure, and they do not allow students to use their circumstances as crutches. The CRP teachers studied do not have a “language of lacking” (p. 479). For example, “students were never referred to as being from a single-parent household, being on AFDC (welfare), or needing psychological evaluation” (p. 479).

Additionally, CRP teachers “saw their pedagogy as art” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 478) and saw “teaching as mining—or pulling knowledge out” (p. 479). The teachers observed by Ladson-Billings demonstrated spontaneity and willingness to take risk. One teacher was highlighted as she improvised a lesson in which students' perceptions of royalty was based on a mainstream view. The teacher showed students books from the students' culture that contradicted that perception. CRP teachers see themselves as a part of the community and believe that teaching was a way to give back to the community. CRP teachers inspire students to explore their communities and utilize their voices to make changes.

Social Relations

Social relations refer specifically to the teacher's care and concern for students that serve

as the foundation of the student-teacher relationship. CRP teachers “maintain fluid student-teacher relationships and demonstrate a connectedness with all students” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 480). Teachers recognize that students are also experts in certain fields, and the teachers embrace students’ knowledge. According to Ladson-Billings, students know that the teacher expects them to be an expert on a particular subject and share their expertise with the class. Additionally, teachers who successfully implement CRP also “develop a community of learners and encourage students to learn collaboratively and be responsible for one another” (p. 480). Ladson-Billings asserted that teachers must encourage solid social relationships by inspiring students to learn collaboratively and become invested in the success of other students in the class. CRP teachers reinforce social accountability with practices such as a buddy system for absent students. Ladson-Billings observed that “teachers used this ethos of reciprocity and mutuality to insist that one person’s success was the success of all and one person’s failure was the failure of all” (p. 481).

The Concept of Knowledge

The concept of knowledge refers to what the teacher believes about knowledge and the teacher’s very own sociopolitical consciousness. Ladson-Billings (1995) stated that CRP teachers believe that “knowledge is constructed” (p. 481). CRP skilled teachers also know that “teachers must scaffold, or build bridges, to facilitate learning” (p. 481). The CRP teachers also have the responsibility to view knowledge critically and question the curriculum. Ladson-Billings observed that the critical stance some teachers took toward the curriculum resulted in the teacher supplementing required materials. CRP teachers also demonstrated the ability to use complex assessment strategies beyond assessments that relied on one right answer. Ladson-

Billings observed teachers who provided students with “problems and situations and helped the students to say aloud the kinds of questions they had in their minds but had been taught to suppress in most other classrooms” (p. 482).

Tenets of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994) is based on three tenets: academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. Each tenet is explained below.

Academic Success/Achievement

The first tenet, academic success, calls for teachers to set rigorous learning objectives and teach critical thinking skills. This goes far beyond relating the curriculum to students. This tenet prioritizes academic achievement. Establishing high expectations for students, despite social inequities that may plague urban students, is mandatory for urban student success. This requires teachers to take responsibility for student success and adjust their instruction to ensure that success. CRP teachers use students’ strengths as instructional anchors. CRP teachers provide modeling and scaffolding to help students reach the established high expectations.

The eight teachers featured in Ladson-Billings’ *Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African-American Children* “demanded, reinforced, and produced academic excellence in their students” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160). The featured teachers who were observed were successful at inspiring students to choose to be academically successful. Despite the performance of the district or school, the students of the observed teachers excelled and were at or above grade level. The teachers’ high academic expectations manifested in students

demonstrating “an ability to read, write, speak, compute, pose and solve problems at sophisticated levels—that is, pose their own questions about the nature of teacher- or text-posed problems and engage in peer review of problem solutions” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 475).

Cultural Competence

According to Young (2011), Ladson-Billings’ articulation of cultural competence is the means “to helping students to recognize and honor their own cultural beliefs and practices while acquiring access to the wider culture” (p. 36). Cultural competence encompasses the teacher’s ability to utilize the knowledge students possess in order to connect them to instructional content. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), the pedagogy “provides a way for students to maintain their cultural integrity while succeeding academically” (p. 476). Culturally competent teachers encourage students “to be themselves in dress, language style, and interaction styles while achieving in school” (p. 476), thus creating the image that dispels the myths commonly held by urban students, that learning is not cool and school is not a place where students can be themselves. Cultural competence communicates to students that their culture has value and is relative to their education.

According to Ladson-Billings (1995), when culturally competent teachers embrace the cultures of their students, teachers are able to incorporate students’ culture into the classroom to create true engagement. The incorporation of student culture helps to avoid cultural mismatch and cultural collisions that result in ushering “out those students whose culture is not recognized or valued in the classroom or school setting” (Horsford, Grosland, and Gunn, 2011, p. 583). This requires educators to incorporate culturally competent pedagogy that extends beyond a feel-good curriculum or a prescribed curriculum; culturally competent pedagogy is using the students’

culture as a “vehicle for learning” (Ladson- Billings, 1995, p. 161). Ladson-Billings focused on one culturally competent practice used by a teacher she observed. The teacher used students’ love of music to teach poetry and helped students develop a deep understanding of literal and figurative meanings, thus creating a connection between the academic achievement tenet and cultural competence tenet. Culturally competent teachers are able to reshape the curriculum while maintaining rigor. Culturally relevant teaching “does not modify the content being delivered but rather how that content is delivered” (Horsford et al., 2011, p. 591). Milner’s (2011) study of a culturally competent teacher revealed that the key component to building cultural competence is a willingness to build cultural competence, listening, recognizing one’s own identity, and confronting race.

Sociopolitical/Critical Consciousness

Sociopolitical consciousness entails teaching students to “recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities” (Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008, p. 441). Critical consciousness requires students to question what happens in the world, in the curriculum, and at school. Increasing students’ sociopolitical consciousness entails engaging students in social justice work. The sociopolitical/critical consciousness tenet calls for students “to engage others and the World” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 162). For example, one teacher studied by Ladson-Billings used outdated textbooks to activate students’ critical consciousness. Students were encouraged to critique the knowledge depicted in the textbook and the system that allowed more affluent students to receive new textbooks. Armed with the knowledge, students wrote to their local paper about the situation. The teacher made students read articles that presented the opposing sides, so the students could address all perspectives. The teacher’s ability to engage

students in critically conscious work is largely based upon the teacher's understandings of social inequity, injustices and racial issues (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Recruitment and Staffing Remedies

According to Berry (2008), "recruiting and retaining good teachers for high-needs schools may be the most vexing problem facing America's education policy makers" (p.766). Liu, Rosenstein, Swan and Khalil (2008) explain the dilemma by stating that every time a district or principal fails to hire good and qualified teachers, a student's education is being stolen away. Districts and principals are aware of the impact and have sought to address the problem of recruiting and hiring good teachers with a myriad of solutions. Some principals solve staffing issues by hiring teachers based on "evidence-based staffing" (Cohen-Vogel, 2011, p. 484). Evidence-based staffing is a remedy that bases personnel decisions on a teacher's evidenced ability to improve student achievement as related to state accountability. In this hiring practice, principals report using "performance data to assess their staffing needs, to choose among applicants for teaching positions and to place new teachers once they are hired" (p. 491). In the cross-case and cross-sectional study, ten Florida school principals used evidence-based practices. According to Cohen-Vogel, principals reported "using students' scores on the state standardized exam and alternative tests in non-FCAT grades (e.g., Dibbles; SAT-10) to make teacher staffing decisions" (p. 498). Cannata, Rubin, Goldring, Grissom, Neumerski, Drake, & Schuermann, (2017) reported similar findings. Cannata et al. reported that principals used student-growth indicators or composite teacher evaluation scores in their hiring processes. According to Cannata et al., "Principals ask applicants to bring prior observations and/or evidence of student achievement with them to interview, or to submit such information beforehand" (p. 195).

Cohen-Vogel's (2011) research study found that principals looked for a candidate who possessed true knowledge in the areas indicated as high needs by the state assessment. Principals sought to ensure that the hiring decisions made did not negatively impact the campus' state rating or the campus' prestige. Another principal in the study considered both the state testing requirements and the candidate's willingness to work with diverse population as top priorities when hiring. When conducting research on a candidate, principals asked the referring supervisor questions about the type of student the candidate was accustomed to teaching. Principals deemed the ability to teach different types of students and make data driven decisions as important characteristics. In some cases, principals asked previous supervisors to see a candidate' performance data. Principals of both higher and lower performing schools wanted to know that the candidate could utilize data to drive instructional decisions and impact student achievement (Cohen-Vogel, 2011).

Evidence-based hiring has come under fire because it prioritizes teaching to the test. According to Ellis (2008), schools that are responsible for educating urban students spend more time on test preparation, and this practice can be detrimental to students. Ellis believes that practice can:

Be academically restraining because they are built on a model of learning that discounts learners' understanding of [the subject] in order to privilege their relative standing within an artificially "standardized" set of boundaries, thereby limiting actual opportunities for student success in higher level coursework. (p. 1342)

Grissom, Rubin, Neumerki, Cannata, Drake, Goldring, and Schuermann (2017) also reported barriers associated with evidence-based hiring, stating, "Many principals express discomfort with various measures of teacher effectiveness and are therefore reluctant to base decision on the scores" (p. 25). Principals tended to shy away incorporating survey data and past observations due to bias and observation inconsistencies. Principals in Grissom et al.'s study

expressed a distrust for value-added systems and cite their distrust and teachers' distrust as a primary reason for not incorporating the scores in the hiring process. One principal explained this distrust and stated:

The value-added scores, because they're so elusive to all of us, you know, no one can really explain them and that's just the animal that it is, right? And so, they feel like that there's something behind those scores that isn't fair. (Grissom et al., 2017, p.25)

In recent years, strategic staffing initiatives have included efforts such as seeking out high performing principals and teachers to staff schools. In a study conducted by Pulliam et al. (2014), high performing principals and teachers who demonstrated success in growing their students were recruited to work at turnaround campuses. While some principals identified "setting high expectations and holding students and faculty/staff accountable, putting fundamental structures and policies in place for effective organizational management, emphasizing improved instruction for increasing student achievement, and building relationships and growing the capacity of faculty/staff" (Pulliam et al., 2014, p. 590) as key factors for turning around schools, establishing teacher fit was never addressed in the staffing initiatives; only past performance was considered. The schools studied by Pulliam et al. did not demonstrate a statistically significant improvement in academic achievement.

Blankenstein and Noguera (2015) also reported Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' use of a similar staffing technique of placing top talent at struggling campuses. They reported that Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools began a strategic staffing remedy in 2008, in which "the district placed a highly effective principal—one with a proven track record of improving student achievement and narrowing the achievement gap—in 27 of the lowest performing schools in the district" (p. 127). These principals were able to recruit teachers with performance records that indicated that they were able to help students achieve more than one year's academic growth

each year. Selected teachers were expected to make a three-year commitment to the recruiting campus and “help to instill high expectations for students, collaborate and build the capacity of existing teachers at the school, and be a model of belief in the potential of each student” (p. 127). Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools’ strategic staffing initiative resulted in academic gains for many of the campuses and the district receiving the Broad Prize for Urban Education in 2011. While these results are promising, the literature does not indicate that CRP and fit were used as priorities for recruitment and staffing. The recruiting strategies referenced above only focus on the ability to influence academic and/or standardized test performance. Teachers who were selected to serve in these turnaround schools may possess skills that indicate a fit for urban school students and possession of CRP tenets, but existing literature does not account for using these theories in recruitment and hiring practices.

Recruiting and staffing urban and high-needs campuses comes with a cost. Liu et al. (2008) interviewed central office personnel and principals who “painted a picture in which supply was tight, demand was high, and competition for the most qualified candidates was fierce” (p. 303). In effort to battle the teacher quality supply and demand issue, Liu et al. stated that districts often offer bonuses and flexible salary schedules to recruit teachers, especially in high-needs content areas and at times, in high needs schools as well. Berry (2008) reports the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program and the New York Teaching Fellows Program recruited and staffed high needs schools by paying talented teachers a bonus of \$20,000. Some North Carolina recruitment incentive programs included bonuses ranging from \$2,500 to \$14,000 for teachers who teach and remain at high-needs schools (Berry, 2008). Thirty percent of California’s school districts incentivize teachers with bilingual, ESL and special education certifications. Incentivized based recruitment and retention practices are not limited to the

aforementioned states and programs (Strunk & Zeehandelaar, 2015). In 2007, the U.S. Department of Education “launched a \$99- million Teacher Incentive Fund designed to recruit and retain teachers for high-needs schools and to pay them more for higher student performance” (Berry, 2008, p. 767).

The approach of making urban high-needs schools appealing through monetary incentives operates from the notion that financial incentives alone solve the problem of staffing these schools. This approach does not address the conditions of many urban high-needs schools and does not assess if recruited candidates are a fit or whether the candidate will be able to cope with urban school challenges. Offering monetary incentives does not address candidates who “may not have the knowledge of the community and of the culturally relevant pedagogy that will enable them to teach effectively and to work well with their new students and colleagues” (p.768). Recruitment incentives are proven to be temporary solutions as Kolbe and Strunk (2012) identified that teachers need an ongoing financial reward to remain in the working conditions of high needs schools. Berry (2008) states that while recruitment incentives are important, it is just as important to grow teacher expertise when he or she works on a challenging campus.

Principals are searching for good teachers who are caring, enthusiastic, and strong communicators. Additionally, principals are searching for candidates who can manage a classroom, improve test scores, and positively influence student learning (Engel & Finch, 2015). Typically, principals rely on centralized support and their networks to find good teaching candidates. Principals use the district’s centralized resources such as searchable applicant databases, job fairs and electronic bulletins (Engel et al., 2015). Networking is also a frequent hiring solution for principals. Principals receive prospective teacher referrals from other principals, as well as staff members. One principal reported that “the best person to recommend

a teacher is another teacher in the building. And if you know the teacher—well, I believe that if the teacher in the building is a very good teacher, they would not recommend someone who would not be good” (p. 25). Principals also use the student teacher and substitute pool as staffing solutions. Principals reported that student teachers and substitutes are appealing hires because “they provided an unusual opportunity for observing these teachers in the classroom, and the teachers themselves already had experience with the school’s culture and student population” (p. 26). Principals even reported using community networks, such as churches and newspaper advertisements as a means for attracting talented teachers. Once a viable candidate is identified, principals in the study described using interview processes that prioritized assessing the candidate’s pedagogical content knowledge and ability to engage students.

Existing urban school staffing solutions research suggests recruitment and hiring decisions are not being made primarily based on fit, nor are the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy the basis of staffing decisions. Liu et al. (2008) states that principals have identified that urban school teachers need to possess background and dispositions such as:

A commitment to urban education, interpersonal skills (including the ability to communicate and relate to urban children), a background in urban education (including an understanding of the lives of urban children and experience growing up or working with children in urban settings), and certain personal skills and dispositions that would enable the teacher to work in an urban district. These dispositions included persistence, flexibility, and what one administrator referred to as being “low maintenance”—i.e., having the willingness and strength to do one’s job despite the hurdles and indifference presented by the district bureaucracy. (p. 315)

However, the literature is limited about how to incorporate these dispositions into centralized and decentralized recruiting, screening and hiring practices. The extant literature focuses on the “four distinct phases of the hiring process: recruitment, screening, selection, and the job offer” (Engel et al., 2015, p. 15) and suggests that principals primarily rely on resumes, interviews, work samples and personality tests to staff their campuses. Standing literature also

reports the sentiments of urban principals who believe that while some teachers who are recruited may be “qualified according to NCLB, they might not be able to succeed as urban teachers” (Liu et al., 2008), indicating that urban school teachers need additional qualities. The current literature highlights that many staffing remedies are evidence-based and rely on monetary incentives to address urban school recruitment and hiring. However, these remedies do not address teacher-student connections, culturally relevance or the best fit for urban school students. My study seeks to fill the gap in the research by focusing on a unique component of the recruitment and hiring process: assessing the candidate’s fit for urban students and the ability to be a culturally responsive teacher. This research provides the opportunity for a careful examination of the possibilities associated with the use of the fit theory and the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy in efforts to find the best educator for urban students. To date, there have been studies that focus only on the fit theory in hiring decisions. The intent of my study is to evaluate the current use of these theories and to understand the value of using a combination of both theories in the recruitment and staffing practices.

Summary

In summary, the characteristics of an urban educator are critical to the success of urban students. Urban educators must possess common threads of caring, holding high expectations, connecting to students and communities, challenging students to question injustice, and much more. Urban school districts have the increasingly challenging task of recruiting, vetting and staffing urban schools with educators who can make an impact on student achievement. Some districts use moderately centralized/decentralized processes and allow principals to hire based on the contextual needs of their campuses. So, the loaded question facing urban districts is the

following: How do you find teachers who are a fit for your urban district and how do you keep these teachers? Previous attempts to address teacher recruitment and retention in urban districts have included fiscal remedies, reassignment of high performing teachers to urban schools and the application of various hiring strategies.

Existing research suggests that by utilizing the fit theory (Kristoff-Brown et al., 2005), in which a candidate is evaluated using four constructs: person-job fit, person-organization fit, person-group fit and person-environment fit, principals can select a teacher that is a fit for the campus. But, the current research study provides a unique contribution to the recruitment and staffing body of work because it seeks to illustrate that urban districts may benefit from utilizing the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy because it is possible that finding the right teacher, a teacher who is deemed a fit, could very well be a teacher who demonstrates the tenets of CRP. The fit theory and the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy are the two constructs that serve as the conceptual framework that undergirds this study. Providing culturally relevant instruction has been an ongoing and evolving area of study since the 1980s. Ladson-Billings' (1994) CRP work outlines three tenets: high academic expectations, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. Teachers who are skilled and able to deliver CRP instruction typically have a concept of themselves, maintain social relations, and possess certain beliefs about knowledge. This study aims to examine (or explore) the recruitment and retention practices of teachers in one urban school district through the lens of a framework which incorporates fit theory and cultural relevant pedagogy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This chapter includes the research design, population and sample, data sources, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods. The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine an urban district's current recruitment and hiring practices for inclusion of the fit theory and cultural relevant pedagogy (CRP) tenets. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the current recruitment and hiring practices established in one urban school district?
2. What role does the fit theory have in the district's recruitment and hiring practices?
3. What role do the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy have in the district's recruitment and hiring practices?
4. What is the perceived value of using the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy in recruitment and hiring practices?

According to Teherani, Martimianakis, and Stenfors-Hayes (2015), "Qualitative research is the systematic inquiry into social phenomena in natural settings" (p. 669). Qualitative researchers gather and analyze data to gain insight into "how people experience aspects of their lives, how individuals and/or groups behave, how organizations function, and how interactions shape relationships" (p. 669). Cohen-Vogel (2011) reports that "qualitative approaches are not ideal for measuring the prevalence of a phenomenon but are instead most valuable for theory development and to build understanding about how a phenomenon works" (p. 499). This exploratory case study sought to understand aspects of the recruitment and hiring practices of an urban district (see Figure 2).

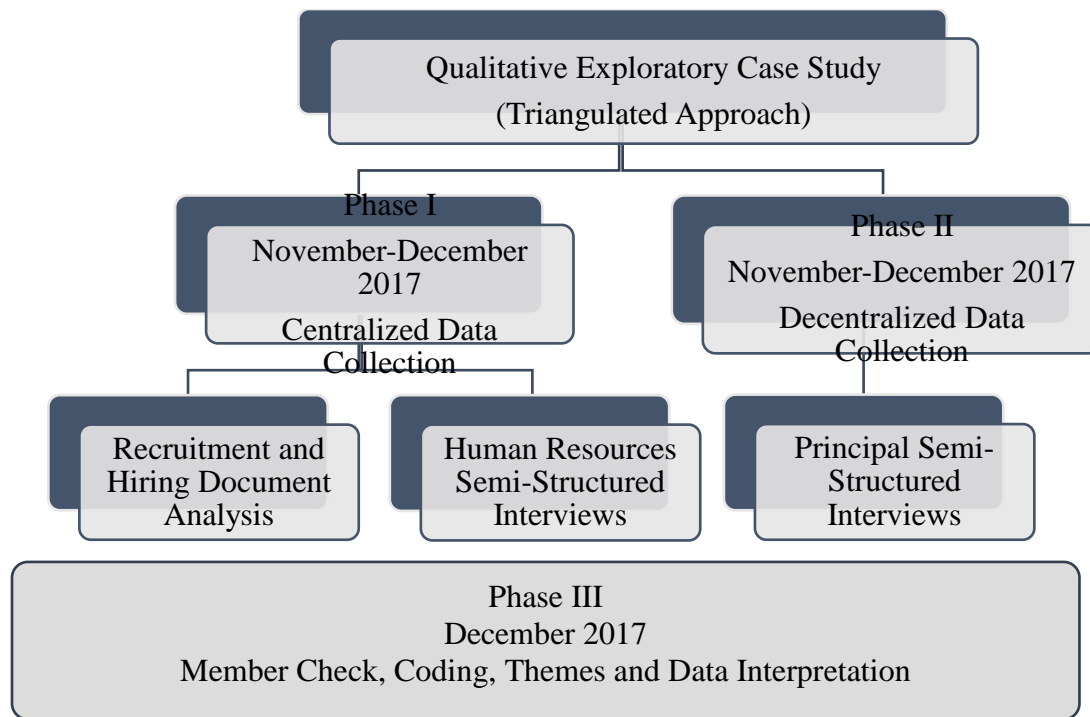


Figure 2. Process for the qualitative exploratory case study. Data collection came from centralized and decentralized sources. According to Hesse-Biber (2017), triangulated approaches help to clarify meaning and build validity in case studies.

Qualitative Exploratory Case Study Research Design

The case study approach, triangulation of the data, and timeframes are described in Figure 2 below. The case study approach is appropriate because the case study design allows for “an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a ‘real life’ context” (Simons, 2009, p. 21). An exploratory case study offers valuable data-gathering opportunities, and the implication from this study may also have implications for other cases like it (Hesse-Biber, 2017). According to Hesse-Biber, “pursuing an exploratory design allows researchers to gain new insights into their research question with the goal of formulating specific ideas or theories they might want to later use to test out their ideas on similar cases” (2017, p. 223). The use of an

exploratory case study in this research is predicated on the belief that this study may yield results and implications that will support other urban districts as they seek to evaluate how they recruit and hire teachers who are both a fit and culturally responsive.

Sample

This study used purposive sampling. According to Bryman (2012), “the goal of purposive sampling is to sample cases/participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed” (p. 418). With the research questions in mind, the purposive sampling targeted the district’s human resources personnel and district principals as research participants.

Overview of the District

This research study was conducted in Arborman School District, which is located in a Texas urban community. Arborman School District is amongst the top twenty-five largest districts in the United States. Arborman School District’s diverse student population encompasses over 100,000 students, which includes the following demographics: 5% White, 22.5% African-American, 70% Hispanic, .2% American Indian, 1.4% Asian, and .9% Multi-Race. Approximately 85.9% of Arborman School District’s students are categorized as economically disadvantaged. The district’s student population also consists of 14% Talented and Gifted students, 8.5% Special Education, and 44% Limited English Proficiency students.

Participants

Personnel from the district’s human resources department, including the recruitment and selection manager, data and design manager, data and design coordinator, senior staffing

director, and the deputy chief who oversees the human resources department were interviewed. These individuals were interviewed because of their direct influence on centralized recruitment and hiring practices. This study included interviewing six decentralized participants, principals from the district, three elementary school principals and three secondary principals. These principals were intentionally selected based on their school's Title I status and recommendation from the human resources department. These principals are responsible for the decentralized selection and hiring practices for their respective campuses. The demographic information for the centralized and decentralized participants is represented in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Participant	Gender	Race	Position	Years in Role
Central Staff Participant 1	Female	White	Centralized	10
Central Staff Participant 2	Female	White	Centralized	1
Central Staff Participant 3	Male	White	Centralized	3
Central Staff Participant 4	Male	White	Centralized	2
Central Staff Participant 5	Female	African American	Centralized	1
Principal 1	Female	African American	Decentralized	3
Principal 2	Male	African American	Decentralized	11
Principal 3	Male	African American	Decentralized	2
Principal 4	Male	White	Decentralized	3
Principal 5	Female	White	Decentralized	3
Principal 6	Female	African American	Decentralized	2

The principals in this study were selected based on a purposive sampling. Principals were recommended by the human resources department. The principal selection criteria required the principal to lead a Title I school. Specifically, selected principals lead schools that included: at least 70% low SES, diverse student populations, and a demonstrated history of successful hiring and retention. The demographic information for the selected campuses is listed below in Figure 3. All selected campuses have between 74% and 96% low SES student populations. All campuses are diverse in student populations, reflective of the overall district population.

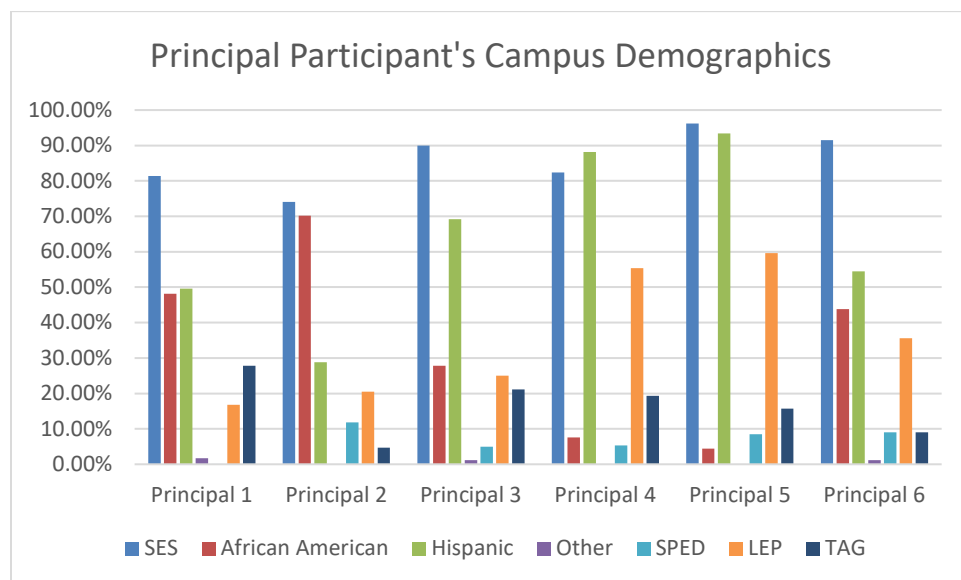


Figure 3. Principal participant's campus demographics.

Data Sources

The two primary data sources of this study were interviews and document analysis. The use of these two sources provided insight into both centralized and decentralized practices. It is important to utilize multiple sources to ensure triangulation, the use of “more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena” (Bryman, 2012, p. 392). Triangulation in this study was achieved by gathering data from three sources: centralized human resources

employees, decentralized principals, and district-level and campus-level recruitment and selection model documents.

Interview questions were adapted from the Multicultural Teacher Capacity Scale (MTCS) (Cain, 2015), found in Appendix A, but additional questions to account for the fit theory were added to the protocol. Permission to use the Multicultural Teacher Capacity Scale (MTCS) was obtained on April 24, 2017 (Appendix B). The MTCS was selected and used as a proxy for the basis of the interview protocol. The MTCS was chosen based on its foundation in culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive tenets. The MTCS instrument went through an extensive development and validation process including vetting by field experts and teachers, pretesting with focus groups, and piloting with current practicing PK-12 teachers.

The MTCS was utilized to develop interview protocol questions to gather data from principals about the candidate characteristics that they value. An example of an interview question adapted from the MTCS protocol is, “Take a moment and think about your hiring practices and what you value in teachers. Which characteristic are the most important (maximum two characteristics)? Why did you prioritize those characteristics? (a) Actively involved in the community, (b) Can explain rationale for sociopolitical curricular choices, c) Ensures equitable experience and outcomes in classroom, (d) Changes curriculum based on critical reflection and student input, (e) Embraces varied perspectives, and (f) Allows students to play an active role in decision-making to ensure relevance and a reflection of realities.” This question drew from the MTCS teacher characteristics that demonstrate a teacher’s ability to be self-reflective as it relates to the ability to demonstrate cultural competence through the incorporation of various perspectives, community knowledge and understanding of equity into teaching practices. Another example of a MTCS based question found in the interview protocol is, “Take a moment

and think about your hiring practices and what you value in teachers. Which characteristics are the most important (maximum two characteristics)? A.) Evidence of ability to implement a student-centered classroom (including classroom management, engagement and curriculum), B.) Belief that students are capable of success, C.) Ensuring students have access to a rigorous curriculum, D.) Communicating that students can be successful in spite of their circumstances.” This question focuses on the MTCS’ assessment of a teacher’s ability to have high academic expectations for students. Another example of how the MTCS was integrated into the interview protocol is the question that explores principals’ value of a candidate’s sociopolitical consciousness. The protocol question, asks principals to prioritize the most important characteristics, which could include the following: ensuring students understand how to navigate inequitable systems, aligning content and assessments to students’ cultural capital, advocating for students by challenging bias, involving students in taking action against injustice, and helping students understand privilege and marginalization.

The developed interview protocol for this study was vetted by two professors and then piloted with two volunteers. One volunteer was a human resources department member, and the other volunteer was a current principal at a Title I school. The volunteers for the interview protocol verification were not participants in the study. In addition to interview data collection, documents were also reviewed.

Documents from the human resources department such as selection model development, rubrics, recruitment strategies and research that informs processes were requested in writing. District permission was sought to obtain these documents, and during the interviews, participants were asked to provide any other related documents. All of these documents were analyzed and coded inductively. Following the initial analysis, the fit theory and CRP tenets were used during

the second round of analysis. Campus recruitment and hiring protocols utilized by principals were also analyzed for triangulation purposes. This level of triangulation aided in greater confidence in the study's findings. Through the evaluation and analysis of the interview data and documents combined, emerging themes were identified.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection began in the fall 2017 semester and followed the timeline found in Figure 2. I contacted the identified human resources personnel and established an interview time. During the face to face interviews, I also requested documents relevant to the study; these documents were analyzed during Phase I. A NHI certified human resources department member recommended six principals at Title I schools who had a demonstrated history of successful hiring and retention practices. The human resources team member was asked to send an introductory email to the purposeful sampling of principals. After the introductory email, I emailed each recommended principal to explain my study and request their participation. Both centralized and decentralized interviews commenced in November. Document analysis took place in late fall and early winter. Member-checking took place in November and December 2017. At that time, participants had the opportunity to review/member check the interview transcripts, validate and clarify their comments.

Data Analysis

To interpret the data in my study, I engaged in a thematic content analysis in which I analyzed the documents for themes. Thematic content analysis allows for “much more

movement between conceptualization, data collection analysis, and interpretation” (Bryman, 2012, p. 559). According to Bryman, the idea of thematic analysis is the following:

The idea is to construct an index of central themes and subthemes, which are then represented in a matrix that closely resembles an SPSS spreadsheet with its display of cases and variables. The themes and subthemes are essentially recurring motifs in the text that are then applied to the data. The themes and subthemes are the product of a thorough reading and rereading of the transcripts or field notes that make up the data. This framework is then applied to the data, which are organized initially into core themes, within the matrix and or each case. (p. 579)

As I interviewed, I immediately began the transcription and coding process. A combination of inductive and deductive coding was utilized during the analysis process. The initial round of inductive data analysis consisted of identifying common words and phrases that were used as preliminary codes. The preliminary codes were developed after multiple readings of the gathered interview responses. See Table 2 for a list of preliminary codes. This process included creating marginal and summary notes after each interaction with a research participant. Miles and Huberman (1994) expresses the importance of immediately writing notes. “After a field contact...and the production of write-ups, there is often a need to pause and ponder: What were the main concepts, themes, issues, and questions that I saw during this contact?” (p. 51). Bryman echoes this sentiment and recommends coding as soon as possible and asserts that researchers should read through transcripts, field notes and documents multiple times. During the data readings, the researcher should “make marginal notes about significant remarks or observations. Make as many as possible” (p. 576). In addition, Bryman asserts that the key words found in the margins will help to begin the coding process and aid in interpretation. To ensure a thorough coding process, I followed the process Bryman outlines, which includes “identifying meaningful chunks or segments in your textual data (in this case your interview) and giving each of these a label (code)” (p. 317).

Table 2

Preliminary Codes

1. Recruitment avenues	16. Need based decision making
2. Staffing processes	17. Finding fit
3. Perceived characteristics of urban teachers	18. Culturally relevant pedagogy perceived value
4. Lack of CRP processes	19. Need for CRP processes
5. Principals' desired teacher characteristics	20. Challenges
6. Opportunities	21. Current screening processes
7. Alignment with stakeholders about fit	22. Information providers/gate keepers
8. Lack of P-O fit	23. Manpower
9. Principal capacity	24. Talent matching
10. Pipelines	25. CRP knowledge
11. EPI	26. Urban P-E Fit
12. Recruitment rationale	27. Emphasis on P-J fit
13. P-O Fit	28. Fit prioritized traits
14. Process for P-G fit	29. Culture and fit
15. Human resources support	30. Evidence of fit

The next round of analysis drew in the tenets of the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy. During this analysis cycle, a coding scheme was developed based on the conceptual framework and research questions. Specifically, the participant's responses and artifacts were analyzed for evidence relating to a priori codes connected to conceptual framework, P-J fit, P-O fit, P-G fit, P-E fit, academic expectations, cultural competence, and sociopolitical

consciousness. During this analysis cycle, the codes became more defined, and a salient list of codes emerged. A list of salient codes can be found in Table 3. Interview response data were analyzed using the data analysis program, Dedoose. Interview data were reviewed line by line, and direct quotes from research participants were assigned to the related salient code.

Table 3

Salient Codes

1. Need based decision making	12. Staffing processes
2. Finding fit	13. Perceived characteristics of urban teachers/Urban P-E fit
3. Culturally relevant pedagogy perceived value	14. Need for CRP processes
4. Challenges/Opportunities	15. Current screening processes/EPI
5. Alignment with stakeholders about fit	16. Information providers/gate keepers
6. Lack of P-O Fit	17. Manpower
7. Principal Capacity	18. Urban P-E fit
8. CRP Knowledge	19. Emphasis on P-J fit
9. P-O fit	20. Fit prioritized traits
10. Process for P-G fit	21. Human resources support
11. Evidence of	22. Fit

During the final analysis round, I constructed themes that brought related salient coded data under thematic umbrellas. Table 4 represents the process of refining codes into code categories and then into themes. The refined codes or salient codes were placed into categories that related to the research question. For triangulation purposes, centralized and decentralized documents were analyzed and evaluated for shared themes. The data were interpreted and

compiled into written data analysis. The interpretation process answered questions such as “What is going on here? How are these codes/categories related? What is not related? What does all of this mean?” (Hesse-Biber, 2017).

Table 4

Process of Refining Codes

Refined Codes	Code Categories	Correlation of Theme To Question
Need based decision making	Processes	Processes for Rationale for Selection Model Centralized and Decentralized Roles Research Question #1
Staffing process	Processes	
Finding fit	Fit theory P-E fit	Integration of ‘Fit’ in Processes Shared Perception of Fit Research Question #2
Perceived characteristics of urban teachers/Urban P-E fit		
Culturally relevant pedagogy perceived value	CRP tenets	The Values of Fit and CRP Establishing Fit, Teacher Retention and Students
Need for CRP processes	CRP tenets Perceived value	Intersecting Values of Fit and CRP Lack of Measurable Methods
Challenges/ Opportunities	Processes Perceived values	Processes for Rationale for Selection Model Establishing Fit, Teacher Retention and Students
Current screening processes/ EPI	Selection model	Processes for Rationale for Selection Model Integration of ‘Fit’ in Processes

Once the coding process was completed and patterns and themes were evident, graphic representations of the findings were created. Centralized and decentralized participants’ shared thoughts regarding the teacher traits necessary to be an urban educator. Interview responses were analyzed for commonalities and frequency. The same process was applied to the interview question responses in which principals identified the most important fit traits principals

prioritized during hiring. The responses to this question were analyzed for a deeper understanding of traits prioritized by principals as it relates specifically to P-O, P-J, P-G, and P-E fit. Principals were asked to identify the traits that they prioritize as they try to identify a match that meets all “fits” as it relates to their campus.

Participants submitted documents related to their selection processes. The principals submitted campus-based interview questions used to interview teacher candidates, and these questions were compiled and analyzed twice. The analysis evaluated each question to identify evidence of fit theory tenets and CRP tenets.

Principals were asked questions to assess the CRP values that they consider when hiring teachers. For each CRP tenet, principals identified two specific traits from a pre-populated list. The identified values and the corresponding interview commentary were analyzed for frequency among principals, evidence supporting responses, and triangulation with other interview responses and submitted documents.

Ethical Consideration

Bryman (2012) stated that research studies that present harm to participants are unacceptable. Researchers have a responsibility to prevent harm to participants, to obtain informed consent, to respect participants’ privacy, and to avoid deception. In this study, I prioritized confidentiality and ensured that study participants were knowledgeable about the study. Confidentiality was especially important in this research because I wanted research participants to be able to speak candidly and honestly about their practices. With confidentiality in mind, the district and research participants were given pseudonyms. Informed consent involves giving “prospective research participants as much information as might be needed to

make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in a study” (p. 138). Each participant was given full disclosure of the study and signed an informed consent form. I informed all participants that the study was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw at any time.

Limitations to the Study

One limitation of this study is the sample size of principals. This study has six participating principals, which may be considered too small to make a generalization. However, the goal of qualitatively driven studies is not to make generalizations (Hesse-Biber, 2017). According to Hesse-Biber, the aim of qualitative research “is to gain a more complex and richer understanding of the data through intense, in-depth exploration of a process such that the findings from just one case may hold a wealth of transferable information to a wider set of cases” (p. 226). Another limitation was that this study is contingent on centralized and decentralized employees providing honest and transparent responses about the strengths and weaknesses of their respective recruitment and hiring processes. A related limitation was that participants would give honest answers to me, given my positionality in the district. To ensure that participants were as open and honest as possible, I reviewed the confidentiality of the study and assured the participants I was operating purely as a researcher.

Summary

This exploratory case study guided by the aforementioned research questions examined an urban district’s recruitment and hiring practices. The research study employed the use of document analysis and interviews to evaluate the current practices for evidence of the fit theory

and tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy. Data collected represented both centralized and decentralized practices. Chapter 4 presents the findings from the analysis of data.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This study examines an urban district's current recruitment and hiring practices to determine if the district's practices incorporate the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) tenets into how teachers are recruited, identified and selected. This study also examines the perceived value of incorporating the fit theory and CRP tenets into centralized and decentralized recruitment and hiring practices. The first chapter of this dissertation explained the challenge of hiring culturally responsive teachers. Chapter two presented a review of the literature about urban school challenges, the fit theory, culturally relevant pedagogy and staffing remedies. Chapter 3 explained the research methods used to guide this study. This chapter presents the findings and themes that emerged from the data collected. A qualitative exploratory case study was conducted, and data in the form of semi-structured interviews and artifacts were collected from eleven participants: five centralized (district-level) participants and six decentralized (campus-level) participants from Arborman school district.

The arrangement of this chapter is organized by research questions and their direct connection to the themes discovered in the analysis of the research. The following themes were extracted and organized by the corresponding research questions:

1. What are the current recruitment and hiring practices established in one urban school district?

Theme 1: Processes for Rationale and Selection Model

Theme 2: Centralized and Decentralized Roles

2. What role does the fit theory have in the district's recruitment and hiring practices?

Theme 3: Integration of 'Fit' in Processes

Theme 4: Shared Perception of Fit

3. What role do the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy have in the district's recruitment and hiring practices?

Theme 5: The Value of Tenets

Theme 6: Lack of Measurable Methods

4. What is the perceived value of using the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy in recruitment and hiring practices?

Theme 7: Intersecting Values of Fit and CRP

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework which guided this study consists of the fit theory (Kristoff-Brown et al., 2005) and the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The two theories were used to develop the interview questions and to analyze the data gathered from interviews and artifacts.

The fit theory is used to determine how well a person will fit the organization's needs and demands. The types of fit that are being examined in this study are: person-job (P-J), person-organization (P-O), person-environment (P-E) and person-group (P-G) fit. P-J fit evaluates whether a candidate has the credentials, skills and abilities to perform the job. The P-O fit focuses on a person's alignment with organizational values, beliefs and norms (Handler, 2004). The P-E fit is defined as "the degree of congruence or match between personal and situational variables in producing significant selected outcomes" (Sekiguchi, 2004, p. 180). P-E fit includes ensuring that a candidate can be successful with the given resources and environmental circumstances. P-G fit evaluates how well the candidate complements or supplements the team or department he or she will join.

The tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) consist of academic achievement/success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. Academic achievement refers to a teacher's ability to help students experience academic success through rigorous instruction and learning experiences (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Culturally competent teachers are able to use students' prior experiences and cultures as instructional anchors to make instruction relevant. Sociopolitical consciousness requires the teacher to teach students to recognize, question and take action against social injustices and inequities. Sociopolitical consciousness requires teachers to examine their own beliefs and positionality related to inequities. These tenets are considered critical to educating culturally diverse students. This study's data analysis specifically sought to identify the role and potential value of the combination and use of both the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy in the recruitment and hiring practices of an urban district.

Elaboration of Themes

Current Requirements and Hiring Practices

The findings related to the Arborman school district's current requirements and hiring practices, and provide answers to research question 1, are reported in two themes: Processes for Rationale and Selection Model and Centralized and Decentralized Roles. Theme 1 reports the findings related to the centralized, district-level rationale and selection model. Theme 1 focuses on the district's centralized data-driven decisions which inform pipeline selection, deployment of recruitment support, candidates' effectiveness correlations, and selection model components. In addition to data-driven decisions, Theme 1 provides an in-depth description of the district's selection model components and guiding factors. Theme 2 presents findings related to the role of

the district's human resources department, which primarily is to serve as information providers. Theme 2 also presents findings related to the role of principals in decentralized hiring practices. Theme 2 reports the autonomy and individuality of each campus' practices.

Theme 1: Processes for Rationale and Selection Model

Centralized, district-level, recruitment rationale and strategies are driven by the district's data-indicated needs, such as teacher vacancies, projections in high-need content areas and teacher turnover data. The district employs various teacher recruitment pipelines to respond to the data-indicated needs. The district's recruitment pipelines include Teach for America, Spain international teacher program, an in-house district alternative certification program, university partnerships, student teachers and Urban Teachers, a program that consists of a one-year residency as a teacher assistant before becoming the teacher of record. The Teach for America pipeline is primarily used for hard to staff content areas such as math and science. The recruitment department also engages potential teachers through recruitment trips to various locations, such as Puerto Rico. These targeted trips are specifically used to attract bilingual educators, which is a growing need for Arborman School District.

The district's staffing department along with the data and design team analyze the district's recruitment data trends. Recruitment data analysis is driven purely by vacancies and anticipated needs. Central Staff Participant 1 discussed what guides those decisions:

Where are our vacancies? And what kind of teachers are they bringing in from the recent cohorts? So, we look at campuses...on their [type of] turnover. We anticipate how many vacancies they might have for the upcoming school year. We look at campuses that have two or three plus vacancies in any one content area. We deem them a red flag area or an area that requires immediate attention because they don't just have one vacancy.

The district's recruitment department scrutinizes each campus' data to determine the necessary level of support. This process includes an analysis of the following: needed FTEs/Full-time equivalents, teaching positions on the campus, a beginning of the year vacancy snapshot, average number of new hires and assignments, the average number of resignations, turnover calculations, campus status/high needs, the experience of the principal, the percent of unsatisfactory teachers on the campus and the percent of proficient teachers on the campus.

Using the aforementioned data analysis processes and the campus' student achievement performance, a decision is made about the level of recruitment support to offer campuses. Arborman School District has seven recruiters who are paired with a set of campuses to provide targeted recruitment support. Half the recruiters support schools with the highest needs and spend more time doing field work with campuses. The high needs campuses are categorized into a network of schools to help recruiters provide more specialized support. Recruiters complete an annual needs assessment and are in constant communication with principals. Recruiters make weekly contact which includes emails, phone calls and one-on-one meetings to gauge the needs of campuses. Central Staff Participant 3 stated that recruiters work to understand the campus' challenges, principals' candidate desires, and the principals' needs. Principals often ask recruiters to prioritize their core content or any content that has a state assessment. Central Staff Participant 3 explained:

Nine times out of ten, they're asking us to prioritize their core content for anything that's going to be tested. Of course, almost every single principal would probably make the argument of we want a well-rounded student; we want them to have an excellent PE and Health teacher, as much as we want anything, but at the same time they recognize that the core content is crucial.

Recruiters produce a list of candidates based on the campus needs expressed by the principal. Principals then use this list and their prioritized core content areas or state tested areas

to begin the decentralized interview and hiring processes.

The district also utilizes performance data, specifically a candidate's performance in the classroom, to make data-driven recruitment decisions. Once a candidate is hired, the district is able to monitor the teacher's effectiveness using the district's teacher evaluation system.

Candidates' performance data are captured and allow the district to make direct correlations between teacher effectiveness and their respective education preparation programs. This practice allows the district to determine whether the respective preparation program is yielding highly effective teachers. Central Staff Participant 4 shared,

There were years of applicant data and cuts of effectiveness by program. There are certainly viewpoints around effectiveness, around applicant yield and around how that yield informs decisions.

According to Central Staff Participant 4, the district collects performance data for candidates during their first year's performance. The collected data are then disaggregated by program pipeline, so the quality of the pipeline and the pipeline's candidates can be correlated to inform decisions. Central Staff Participant 4 also identified university partnerships, specifically the student teachers, as "one pathway that consistently seems to produce a volume of candidates and seems to be associated with some success teaching based on our evaluation system."

Another factor informing the recruitment rationale is location. The district staffing data trends have indicated that some sectors of the district are more challenging to staff than others. Central Staff Participant 5 reflected on the district's recruitment strategy and driving factors, stating:

At this point recognizing that there has been a huge shift and migration of teachers away from schools in the Southern sector of the district and needing to create some additional opportunities to encourage people or entice people to take on positions in schools in the Southern sector.

Central Staff Participant 5 further elaborated that some of these schools are defined as a "tougher

school or in a tougher neighborhood.”

The district’s available financial resources also determine recruitment decisions. The recruitment tactics that are employed are based upon the candidate yield and the tactic cost. Central Staff Participant 4 reported that the online efforts attracted more candidates and “tended to have a higher return on investment than the number of applicant yielded per dollars spent.” Teacher quality is also considered in conjunction with volume when the district is determining how to allocate resources. Central Staff Participant 3 emphasized the importance of using aggregate data to ensure that “we’re spending our limited resources, time and money, on the programs that are producing the best quality teachers for our internal scale.” The district’s available resources also impact the district’s selection model. The first iteration of the selection process was more thorough and detailed. Central Staff Participant 4 elaborated on why this process was not successful:

I think that was just something that was doing more harm than good in terms of getting high quality potentially good teachers in front of students, not because it wasn’t a good idea, but simply because of implementation and the amount of resources coming into it. There were not enough resources dedicated to this model. I think there are ways to remedy that through employing current teachers as part-time application reviewers, shifting staff resources.

The former centralized process included a group interview, in which candidates discussed an article, and central staff employees evaluated the candidates for fit. This process was changed after one hiring season due to the high volume of applications coming into the district. Only a fraction of the candidates completed this extensive process. The district did not have the resources to centrally screen candidates using this process.

The district now uses the Teacher Match Educators Professional Inventory (EPI) to guide the selection model and to compensate for the lack of available manpower. The current selection model uses an assessment, Educators Professional Inventory (EPI) and other key indicators to

help assess candidate quality and manage the large volume of candidates applying for positions. According to Central Staff Participant 3, the district typically hires 1,500 to 2,000 teachers per year, and there is not much time to assess for individual characteristics. Central Staff Participant 2 concurs and elaborates on the reality of the district's ability to evaluate each candidate and the district's reliance on EPI to fill in the gaps. Central Staff Participant 2 stated:

We heavily rely on the EPI to guide our decisions when it comes to teachers...because it is a such an efficient yet effective way to categorize them. It's unrealistic to have us read everyone's resume one by one, especially since we get thousands of applicants, and we're trying to find teachers for maybe 2,000 vacancies in our district.

Collecting data via the EPI assessment allows human resources to effectively manage the high volume of applications. The EPI assessment also allows the district to provide principals with relevant candidate information to support the campus level data-driven selection processes. The EPI assessment is a 100-question inventory that measures the candidate in three domains: attitudinal factors, cognitive ability, and teaching skills. According to the EPI website, attitudinal factors, cognitive ability, and teaching skills are key indicators of highly effective teachers. The EPI website states that attitudinal dispositions include "the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own personal growth" ("EPI," n.d.). The assessment also measures a candidate's cognitive abilities or the candidate's "thinking skills used to carry out the mechanisms of learning, remembering, problem solving, and paying attention" ("EPI," n.d.). EPI's third domain measures the candidate's teaching skills and ability to improve student outcomes. Central Staff Participant 3 shared that EPI scores above 50 positively correlate with the potential ability of a candidate to advance student growth.

The selection model encompasses other key indicators such as a candidate's evidence of impact on student achievement. According to Central Staff Participant 4, this selection model component correlates with research that a candidate's previous effectiveness is a good indicator of a candidate's future effectiveness. The application rubric evaluates the evidence of impact on student achievement based on whether the evidence is relevant to the subject/grade level academic standards. The rubric takes into account whether the candidate provides standardized test data. The rubric also evaluates whether the evidence includes annual growth, comparison data and/or achievement of ambitious goals. Examples provided on the rubric as evidence are a candidate's students demonstrating two years of academic growth in one year, 65% of students passing where 20% is typical, or students earning the highest scores in the district, passing AP exams, reaching debate team finals, etc.

The selection model also prioritizes the candidate's experience with diverse communities.

In this portion of the selection model, candidates share their past history and experiences working with diverse communities. The selection model prioritizes a candidate's expressed beliefs about all students' abilities, respect for diverse communities and all students' right to a quality education. It also gives precedence to teachers who have been a teacher of record.

The selection model also includes a pre-work activity that assesses a candidate's ability to analyze data, create action plans, and make adjustments to ensure student understanding of concepts. Following the data analysis, the pre-work activity requires candidates to generate an intervention action plan that accelerates and deepens student learning. The pre-work activity asks candidates to be responsive and support students who continuously do not demonstrate growth.

The district's selection model is driven by data, including anecdotal conversations with principals, high-need content areas, pipeline data, and sector-based needs. It gauges information

about candidates, which could indicate a candidate's potential to be successful in Arborman School District. The model gathers information about a candidate's past record of success, experience in diverse communities, pre-work and EPI assessment results. Limited central staff capacity and the large quantity of applications make the EPI a useful tool in the selection model. The overarching goal for Arborman School District's rationale and selection model is to better support principals by providing as much relevant candidate information as possible.

Theme 2: Centralized and Decentralized Roles

Arborman's centralized staff, human resource's primary role in the hiring process is that of an information provider. The district's screening process seeks to provide principals with relevant and quality information about potential candidates that can support their decentralized campus-level hiring processes. This is a contrast to the past iterations of central staff's hiring processes. In the past, the human resources department served as the gatekeepers and deemed candidates ineligible for hire. Central Staff Participant 3 described the past process in which candidates had to apply, answer essays, complete a data exercise, participate in a phone interview, and then, if they passed the phone interview, they were invited to an in-person group interview. Candidates had to be successful in the aforementioned processes to be placed in an applicant pool of eligible hires.

Central Staff Participant 3 expressed how this process conflicted with the needs and desires of principals. Central Staff Participant 3 stated:

That was one of those things that was great in theory, and I do feel really confident that the people that made it through that process were excellent teachers, but principals don't always want us to say, 'Hey, here's the one person we've screened as great for you.' They want to be able to screen ten people so that they can assess for cultural fit, which makes perfect sense.

Central Staff Participant 4 provided further insight into the conflict presented by the process. According to Central Staff Participant 4, principals simply wanted a list of candidates that “appear to be successful, have some indicators that they might be successful and meet certification requirements...and for the rest of the conversations to be determined by principals themselves.”

Three years ago, the human resources department reevaluated the screening process and modified its role to primarily serve as data collectors and information providers for principals. Central Staff Participant 3 further elaborated on human resources’ current role in the selection process:

Through the selection process, we don’t view ourselves as gatekeepers anymore. We view ourselves more as data collectors for the principals. We still have the candidates do an assessment as part of the application, that tests their cognitive ability, their teaching knowledge, pedagogy skills, things like that. And we have them answer essays, like the one I mentioned, where it talks about if they’ve worked in diverse communities before or not... We do ask the candidate to provide some kind of proof or documentation of their previous student growth. We try and collect as much of that data as possible.

Once all the candidate’s information is received, the human resources department scores each candidate’s application using a rubric. Candidates are then tiered based on their experience working with diverse communities, certification, evidence of previous student growth, experience as a teacher of record, and EPI score. Candidates who are in the top tiers receive a pre-work data activity. This activity requires applicants to analyze a data set, create an action plan, and be responsive to failed interventions. This activity is not scored by human resources, but it is another data point that is provided to principals. All of these data points are compiled into a data file and dispersed to principals, who then screen for the best candidate for their campuses. Central Staff Participant 4 explained what this data file provides: “a quick bucket of information to principals about the quality of the candidate’s application or to the extent that

there is evidence in the application that indicates a higher likelihood of effectiveness versus lower likelihood of effectiveness.” Principals can also access general candidate information using the online application system. Figure 4 outlines the centralized screening process and the transfer of data sources to principals.

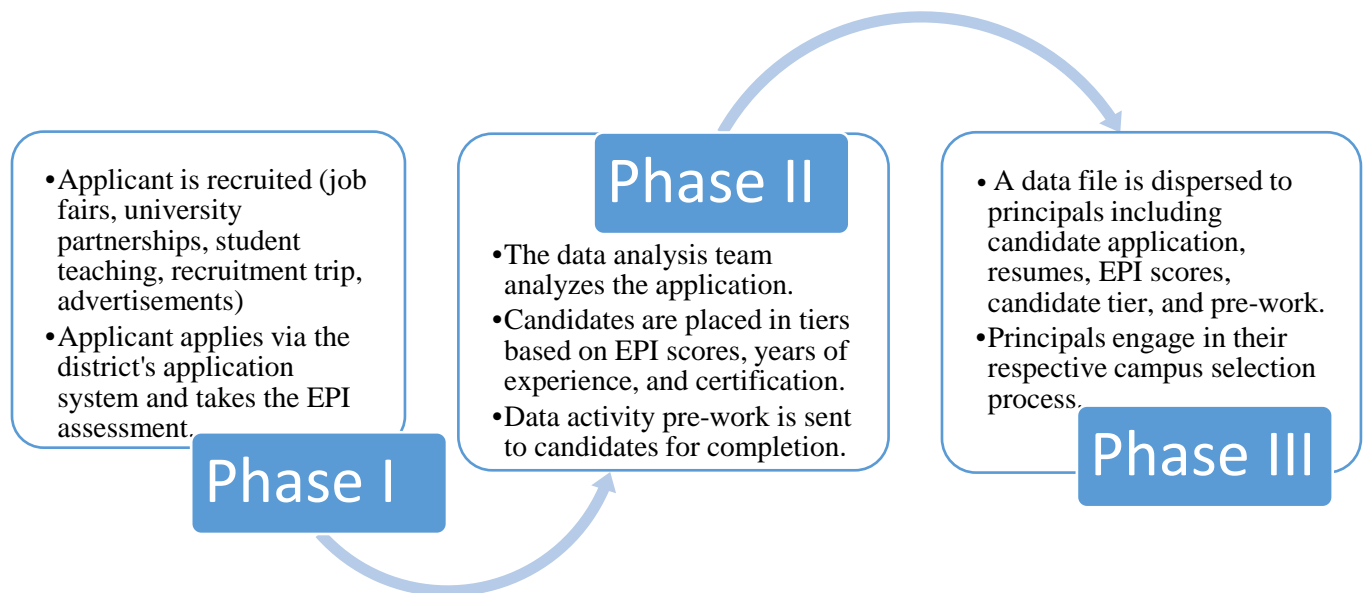


Figure 4. Screening process flowchart. This flowchart provides an overview of the centralized screening process and the transfer of the process to the principals. This flowchart also explains the data that central staff provides to principals.

The district’s role as information providers has associated challenges. The human resources department works to balance the amount of information principals need so the application process doesn’t become a barrier for prospective teachers. Central Staff Participant 4 mentioned:

The general challenge with a district with 200 plus schools is the difficulty to collect all the possible information that a principal might want to inform each of their individual hiring processes. So, you end up having to make decisions to provide the most relevant information possible, up to the point where the application itself starts being a deterrent to the applicants. That way you sort of have to cut the conversation off, because the other competing concern is you want the pool of candidates to be as robust as it can be, and the more you start to gather potentially extraneous information or exhaustive information about candidates, the higher the chance that you’re turning a candidate away, simply based on the length of the application itself.

Although the human resources department continuously seeks to align with principals about what constitutes the highest leverage candidate information, the department is mindful of this constraint.

Following the central staff screening process, the hiring process becomes very decentralized, and principals have the autonomy to implement their own campus-level hiring models and practices. Though the human resources department provides recruitment support, principals revealed that they rely heavily on themselves and their networks for recruiting teachers. Principals identified informal methods of recruitment such as word of mouth and independent searches. Principal 4 stated that his searches include “looking at surrounding districts, their teacher of the year candidates...teachers that have been honored and things like that. And I seek those people out.” Principals rely on their own networks for various reasons. Principal 5 specifically cites that she does not rely on the human resources’ recruitment support because of the uniqueness of her campus. Principal 5 expounded on her reasoning for self-reliance and network reliance:

I know my campus is unique. I know that we have our struggles. We are a previously Improvement Required campus, so when it comes to job fairs and stuff like that, I don’t feel that’s the space that we shine in. I also feel like if you don’t come to my school, you can’t understand it. So, I also don’t ever hire someone who hasn’t been to my school...I am always on the hustle for people, so I really rely on my network...so it’s not like I have to always know somebody, but I know a lot of people that I trust, so I always rely on knowing somebody who knows somebody.

Two principals did identify using the human resources department’s recruitment support. Principal 1 identified using the list of candidates/data file dispersed by the human resources department. Principal 1 stated, “The list might have anywhere from 40-80 names on it, so I don’t have to go through the application system aimlessly searching.” Principal 1 expressed that the list was valuable and helped her process:

I can take that spreadsheet that has the person's name, the email, etc., and the teacher match score on it, which I don't know what the teacher match is, but I just know it's sorted by the highest, and I just say, 'Okay, I guess that's good. I'm just going to sort from the highest to the lowest,' and then I pull out those candidates that might have a master's degree or a couple of years of experience. So, the list is really good.

Principal dependence on the human resources department varies. Most principals identified receiving a list of candidates from central staff, and they also identified that primary communication with central staff begins when the principals are ready to make a recommendation for hire. Principal 3's experience differs and includes frequent communication with his identified staffing specialist. Principal 3 stated:

I have a staffing specialist who seeks me out and says, 'Hey, what are you looking for in a candidate? So, recent graduate, experienced person, novice person, you know degree, background, things along those lines. And then she sends me lists of applicants.

Principal 4 reported that he primarily communicates with the human resources department once a recommendation has been made. Principal 4 stated, "I call them [human resources] and tell them who to put through the system. I fill out the paperwork and send it to them." Principal 6 shared her experience with the district's human resource department. Principal 6 stated:

I haven't had a lot of interaction with human resources with the recruitment and hiring process. That has mainly been done away from them [human resources]. The only time that we really had to connect with them is when we made a recommendation for hire.

Principal 4 also cited that the recruitment support provided by human resources has been minimal. Principal 4 states, "There's supposed to be some guy that helps with recruiting, but he introduces himself once a year, and then you never really hear from him again. And he doesn't reply to emails." Principal 1 also expressed similar sentiments regarding the lack of communication from human resources, the uncertainty of support personnel and the impact on finding good candidates at various points in the school year. Principal 1 stated:

In terms of the process, it's very, very, very tedious on the principal's end. So, if you really want good people, you really have to recruit them yourself, and it's highly unlikely that you're going to find the perfect candidate once the school year has started...I'll put it like this. I didn't know that we had a recruiter. I know I have a staffing specialist. When I told my staffing specialist that I was still looking and could she help me, she contacted somebody and within two hours, I had a list from somebody, but I didn't recognize who that somebody was. I'm sure that there is somebody, but I don't know who that person is.

Principal 1 further elaborates on the impact of the lack of communication and shares an experience in which she lost a top candidate due to lack of communication and processes. After a month of interviewing candidates, Principal 1 extended an offer to the top candidate, but the offer was declined due to the salary quote. Principal 1 expressed her dismay with this situation:

They got down to the wire, and I thought we were going to have him, went through the whole nine yards, but they got to the end of the process and realized, 'Oh, this money isn't right.' There's no negotiation. He had a PhD, a doctorate, credentialed to teach... We talked about where he could live. I mean we spent a lot of time with this candidate and didn't get him. So, we missed out on that. Got another list from human resources, and this time I didn't even look at resumes, nothing. I looked at all the teaching matches and took the top 15 to 18 and sent a mass email. One person hit me back and said that they would be interested, and they didn't hit me back the next day. They got back with me probably three or four days later, and by this time, school leadership had placed somebody in the position because the person had come off of leave and their job had been given away, so the person was excess. So, since I was still sitting over here in September with a Social Studies vacancy, they put that excess person down in the position. But, hey I have a teacher now that has taught World Geography for one year and the rest of the time been a PE teacher. But, I got a teacher.

Principal 2 believes that an additional area of disconnect is found in the screening process.

I think over the years there's been some areas of disconnect. I see that there is a process in place to try to screen applicants through some virtual and digital means, but I think we lose the human touch.

The campus selection models that a campus principal chooses to employ is primarily independent of the human resources department. Interview responses revealed very similar selection model processes between principals. Most of the principals used a multi-step process to vet, screen and interview candidates. A common practice was to use the resumes or the data file supplied by the human resources department as an initial screener. Principals reported

conducting phone interviews with the lead candidates as a next step. To determine the best candidate, principals invited candidates to face-to-face interviews.

The interview practices were somewhat different at each campus. Principal 2 described his interview practices as unorthodox. Principal 2's interview process includes a lot of role play. "I do a lot of role play because I need to see responses. I need to see how people are going to respond in the moment. I need to see natural responses". This practice of acting out realistic scenarios allows Principal 2 to determine whether this is the appropriate setting for the candidate. Following the role-play, candidates are asked to reflect on the outcome of the role-play, and the principal provides feedback. Principal 2 stated,

I like to give them some very critical feedback, and I like to look at their response to see how they handle receiving feedback... if we have time I like to try to roll it back again and see how that goes.

Principal 2 also involves the candidate's potential supervising administrator in the role play and feedback.

Involvement of other leadership personnel and other teachers in interview processes was also a common practice. All principal participants include distributive leadership in their interview process. Interview panels commonly include other administrators, instructional coaches, department heads, or teachers with whom the candidate would work. Principals shared that the people who participate on these panels are trusted individuals, with valued perspective, and who are good at their respective jobs. For example, Principal 5's process includes an initial interview with the principal and assistant principal. The second round of the interviews includes bringing in additional trusted team members as panelists. Principal 5 stated, "You need to have those core people on your team that you trust and will tell you the truth." She believes that incorporating group interviews is necessary to maintain a healthy team culture because "We

worked too hard to assemble this team.” Principal 5 stated that she will only hire someone who demonstrates that they will work well with the team and the students.

To ensure that all interview panel participants are adequately prepared, Principal 4 conducts a pre-interview session. During this session, the panel reads an article about behavior-based interviews, and they create a faux teacher profile for the position. The interview panel then identifies questions that could help lead to the identification of the person who fits the profile the faux profile. The other principals had less structured models that included each interview panelists asking a set of questions and a debrief following each interview. None of the principals used a rubric, and one principal stated that her team really uses a “gut feeling” when deciding if a person is the best candidate.

Having a candidate teach a model lesson to students is a practice that two of the principals identified as vital to their interview process. Both, Principal 1 and Principal 2, use this opportunity to observe the candidate’s instructional skills, ability to connect with students, and reception of performance-based feedback from administrators and students. Principal 1’s process entails having the candidate teach the same grade and content as the vacancy for which he or she is applying. Both principals seek feedback from the students to understand if this is a teacher with whom they can connect. Principal 2 administers a survey to students to solicit this feedback.

Principal 2 stated:

The kids will do some kind of feedback and we’ll say, “What do you think? All we’re doing is assessing the delivery and resources and relationship with the students. Because that’s what the kids can give you feedback on, ‘Do you think you would like to have this teacher? Did you understand the lesson that they presented?’ I always do something where they’re introducing a concept, not reviewing, not something the kids already know. So, you’re introducing something different but that is in that grade level for the students.

Principal 2 provides feedback to the candidate based on the evaluation tool and based on the students’ feedback. He explained that it is important to see how the candidate responds to

constructive feedback.

The role of Arborman School District's human resources department has evolved from gatekeepers to information providers. The evolution was spurred by central staff capacity and the desire for principals to screen multiple candidates, rather than a few handpicked candidates. The human resources department has a screening processes that provides principals with a variety of relevant candidate information, and principals are able to filter through all candidates and determine candidates eligible for the campus' decentralized hiring process. Principals reported receiving varying levels of support from central staff as they seek to fill campus vacancies. Once the centralized screening process is finished, principals have the autonomy to implement their own campus hiring practices. The practices vary by campus.

The Role of Fit

The findings related to the role of the fit theory in the district's recruitment and hiring practices answer research question 2 and are categorized into two themes. Theme 3, integration of fit in processes, reports findings related to the application of person-job (P-J) fit, person-environment (P-E) fit, person-organization (P-O) fit, and person-group (P-G) fit. The findings in Theme 3 are organized by reporting the 'fits' found in centralized processes and the 'fits' that principals ask to be prioritized. Theme 4, shared perceptions of "fit," focuses on the perceptions of fit shared by decentralized and decentralized participants. The findings in Theme 4 reveal that both centralized and decentralized participants believe that principals are the best determiners of fit, principals' perspectives of fit and decentralized practices to evaluate fit for a campus.

Theme 3: Integration of ‘Fit’ in Processes

Person-Job Fit in Processes

Person-job (P-J) fit is evident in central staff hiring processes, as each candidate is required to submit transcript, resumes, and evidence of certification or evidence of enrollment in an educator preparation program. The human resources department screens applicants to ensure they meet the threshold criteria for being a teacher. Central Staff Participant 2 stated:

We have to filter through applicants that apply for a position for which they are either unqualified based on previous experience, or they have not had the proper education or certification to support that they would need to be successful in the role.

Principals at specialized schools, such as collegiate academies and schools where students earn industry certifications, have additional person-job fit requirement. Positions at Principal 1’s campus requires preference to be given to candidates who have a master’s degree with 18 content area hours and are credentialed to teach at the community college.

Principals primarily communicate two main desires related to person-job fit. According to the central staff participants, principals are asking for content and experience to be prioritized. Central Staff Participant 3 gave a recount of common emails from principals stating, “Hey, my math teacher resigned, I need someone that has really strong content knowledge and maybe a couple years of XYZ experience.” Central Staff Participant 3 stated that principals rarely ask that a candidate possesses particular intrinsic details. Principals value experience and content certification as the most important person-job fit.

Principals value experience, but the majority of the applicants are first year teachers. Central Staff Participant 1 identified this dynamic as a challenge, as some school administrators desire teachers with experience because of the schools’ academic and behavioral challenges, but these schools have a high number of vacancies at various times of the year. To help principals fill

their vacancies, Central Staff Participant 1 attempts to help principals identify qualities beyond experience. Central Staff Participant 1 described this support:

Trying to support with finding teachers, especially at this point in the year that have tenure and that are a strong teacher is difficult. Really trying to find other qualities in new teachers that might say this would be a good fit and you have some tenured people on your campus that could help support this person, so let's take a chance on them because they have this in their background.

The human resources department also uses the Teacher Match EPI assessment as a method of gauging person-job fit and person-environment (P-E) fit. According to the Teacher Match EPI website, EPI's third domain measures a candidate's teaching skills or person-job fit. The domain focuses on a candidate's ability to plan for successful outcomes, create a learning environment, instruct and analyze and adjust.

Some EPI questions focus on a teacher's ability to plan successful outcomes, thus providing a gauge of the teacher's person-job fit. The questions specifically evaluate a teacher's knowledge of standards, application of the standards to instruction, ability to develop objective-based lesson plans and assessments. According to EPI (n.d.):

Effective teachers identify what is important for students to learn and to design instruction that enable the students to achieve those learning goals. Planning is based on a deep understanding of content knowledge about one's students—the students' knowledge and skills as well as their interests and cultural backgrounds.

This domain also gauges a candidate's skills set in establishing routines and procedures and creating a respectful and safe environment for students. The EPI assessment measures whether teachers can:

Create an ideal classroom that is comfortable and respectful; it is a safe environment in which students feel free to take intellectual risks. A classroom that is highly conducive for learning also runs very smoothly; routines and procedures are efficient, and student behavior is cooperative so that the work in the classroom is focused on learning. ("EPI," n.d.)

A teacher's instructional capabilities are also evaluated on EPI. A candidate is asked

questions about checking for academic understanding, differentiating instruction, and deepening student understanding. The EPI assessment seeks to determine if the candidate possesses the capabilities to:

Engage students with the content---they implement the plans designed...Teachers encourage students to participate in a community of learners developing a deep understanding of important concepts. Effective teachers continuously monitor and adjust performance, both in themselves and in the students they teach. They identify professional skills and responsibilities that are not visible in the classroom but that are crucial for successful classroom teaching and for enhancing the profession of teaching overall. (“EPI,” n.d.)

The district uses two methods to assess a candidate’s capacity to adjust practices based on data, the EPI assessment and the district’s pre-work activity. EPI asks questions to target a teacher’s reflectiveness in practice, modification of lessons based on data, and reteach practices.

Person-Environment Fit in Processes

The human resources department uses EPI and the short essay question to evaluate a candidate’s person-environment fit. The first domain of the EPI assessment measures a candidate’s attitudinal dispositions. Specifically, the domain assesses the candidate’s agreeableness, commitment, conscientiousness, expectations of students, resourcefulness, learning orientation, commitment/follow through, self-efficacy, extroversion, and life satisfaction. The EPI assessment evaluates person-environment fit through asking questions about “a candidate’s ability to learn from successes/failures and change behavior accordingly, pursue learning opportunities even when outside of their comfort zone” and to “maintain high productivity and performance in stressful situations, and view failures objectively while rebounding quickly” (“EPI,” n.d.). The EPI assessment also measures a candidate’s resourcefulness by measuring “a candidate’s attitude and dispositions toward solving problems

with what they have and doing more with less” (“EPI,” n.d.). The assessment also evaluates candidates’ confidence in their abilities to produce student outcomes.

While EPI provides a wealth of fit information for principals, based on the principals’ responses, not many principals are familiar with the EPI assessment or meaning of EPI data. Principal 1 and Principal 4 admit using the EPI in decision making, but neither understood the meaning of the EPI score or the categories. Neither of the other four principals identified using the EPI data to inform their hiring processes. Principal 1 commented, “I am not familiar with the Haberman or even this new Teacher Match. I don’t know what the questions are or anything on there.”

The document review analysis provided evidence of the district’s attempt to assess person-environment fit using the employment application short answer question about a candidate’s previous experience working in diverse communities. The scoring rubric awards points based on a candidate’s previous history and their belief system regarding students from diverse backgrounds and poverty. The application gauges whether a candidate has high expectations for all students or if the candidate will lower standards from particular students based on their background. The candidate’s tone regarding serving high needs communities and populations is assessed. If a candidate’s response exhibits an insensitive or disrespectful tone, the candidate’s scores are lowered. This information is available to principals, but none of the principals indicated that they were aware of this application feature.

Person-Organization Fit in Processes

Evidence of the person-organization (P-O) fit in the district’s practices was not as defined. Central Staff Participant 4 admitted that the organizational core beliefs of the districts

were not as clear, thus aligning recruitment and selection processes with organizational beliefs is an area for growth. Central Staff Participant 4 believed that the district's practices are implied in the organization's definition of an effective teacher based on performance. According to Central Staff Participant 4:

In term of alignment to the district definition of effective teaching, which is ostensibly the district's teacher evaluation system, there were direct efforts to study and correlate first-year teaching performance back to information available at point of hire. Then we pursued selection avenues that reflect what appeared to make a teacher successful based on the roadmap, the district's evaluation system. The goal was to align selection to the competencies that appear to ultimately align to the set of indicators that we're going to assess teachers on in our evaluation system. In that sense, if we take it a little more tactical than the core beliefs of the organization and take it down to the definition of effective teaching, there were direct attempts to align to the idea of effective teaching rather than core beliefs. Hopefully data from this most recent iteration of the selection model shows that it has the ability to predict effectiveness based on the district's definition of effective teaching.

Arborman School District's centralized and decentralized practices demonstrate evidence of fit. The centralized practices prioritize person-job fit and person-environment fit. The application process asks person-job and person-environment fit questions that require candidates to share evidence of past student success, experience with diverse communities, and a plan to respond to learning needs. The EPI also displays evidence of person-job and person-environment fit by exploring candidate's teaching abilities, resourcefulness, and ability to adapt and adjust instruction based on learning needs. Principals are not familiar with the wealth of information that EPI provides. Principals also primarily express person-job fit needs to the human resources department. The person-organization fit is an area for possible improvement, as the core beliefs of the organization are not as clear. The district's person-organization fit aligns with the district's vision of effective teaching.

Theme 4: Shared Perceptions of Fit

Shared Perceptions of Person-Environment Fit

Shared perspectives of person-environment fit traits of urban teachers guide interview processes and selection model protocols in both centralized and decentralized practices. When research participants were asked, “What are your personal beliefs about the qualities necessary for a teacher working in an urban district,” specific and common traits emerged. The most commonly reported traits were: grit/perseverance/resiliency/tenacity, understanding the population served, ability to build relationships/connect, and content knowledge. Other traits emerged as important person-environment traits as well. The responses regarding person-environment fit traits of urban teachers are represented in Figure 5.

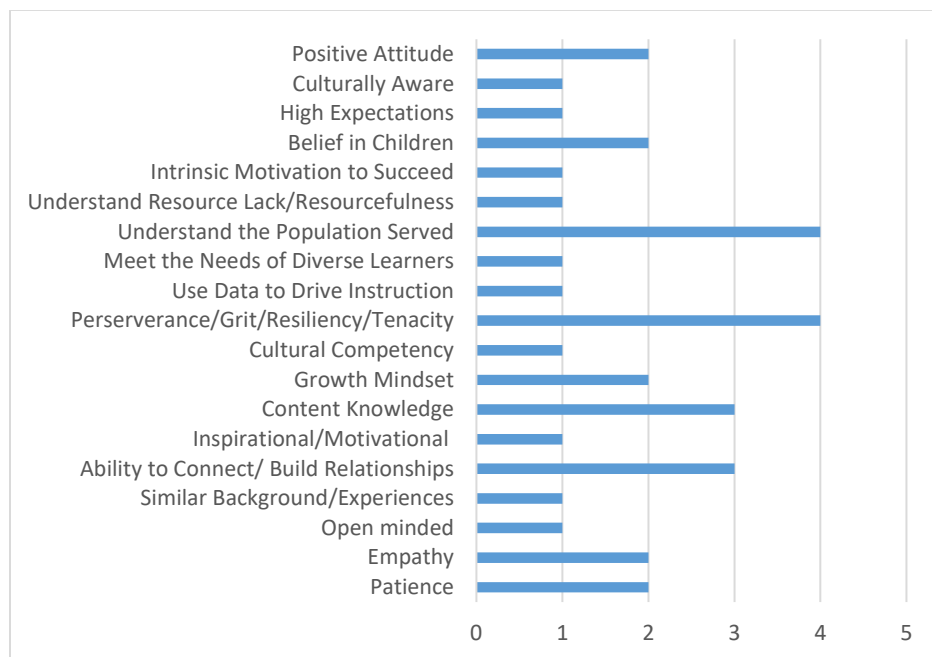


Figure 5. Shared perceptions of person-environment fit traits of urban teachers response frequency from centralized and decentralized staff about teacher traits necessary for P-E fit.

Participants highlighted grit as a necessary trait for urban teachers because urban environments present unique challenges. Principal 3 recognizes that teaching is a challenging profession, but “challenges in an urban district are magnified. So, you have to have an innate

desire to want to be successful...you have to have high expectations for yourself and the students you serve.” Principal 4 had similar commentary. “I think teachers have to be resilient...they have to have tenacity. They have to understand that it is a journey that will never end, and the challenges will never stop coming. They have to be fighters.”

Participants highlighted that urban teachers must be able to understand the population that they serve and to know that this understanding is vital to urban teachers’ success. While participants believe that being from a similar background is desirable, they believe that being able to understand urban students is a requirement. Principal 1 expounded on this person-environment fit:

I think a teacher working in an urban district must understand the population that they’re going to serve and not have lived it but understand it and understand the challenges that they will face academically and the challenges that they will face, socially and emotionally with students.

Principal 6 shared similar thoughts and stated that teachers must know their audience, “know a little bit about their background, where they come from, how they learn, what is exciting or engaging to them, and what are different turn offs for them.” Principal 5 looks for key indicators during interviews with candidates to assess their ability to identify with students. Principal 5 stated, “We look for clues and things that they say about kids and whether they identify with the kids or if they’re like an outside entity to them.” Principal 5 identified speech indicators that shed light on whether candidates view students as outsiders. Principal 5 shared a few examples, “‘So you know how these kids are’ that would be a statement that would never get you hired at my campus. I look for things like ‘our kids’, ‘my kids.’”

Another shared characteristic essential to person-environment fit for urban teachers is the teacher’s ability to build relationships and make connections, a trait that is dependent upon understanding your population. Principal 2 emphasized that a candidate’s ability to build rapport

with students, as well as their families is equally as important as possessing the content knowledge. Principal 2 commented that “I think the role of a teacher has changed tremendously, in that I don’t believe we just teach children anymore. I believe we educate families,” which magnifies the importance of a teacher’s ability to build relationships. Content knowledge also emerged as a fundamental P-E fit trait for urban teachers. Principal 3 explained the importance of content knowledge by stating, “You have to know what you’re talking about if you’re a teacher. You can’t just get in there and make it up off the cuff. You have to know what you’re talking about.”

Central Staff Participant 3’s response echoed the thoughts of all principals.

My opinion of what makes a quality teacher for an urban district can be split up into four different pieces. One is content knowledge, and that’s probably the most obvious one. I look at teacher qualities almost as a Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, where the base foundation is content knowledge. It has got to be someone who really knows the content and how to relate it to students. The next level up is a growth mindset, so not just someone who’s willing to accept feedback, but actively seeks it and uses it in productive ways. The next level up is cultural competency because in a school district like Arborman, as a teacher you’re going to have a really wide range of really every aspect of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, etc. So, someone who understands and can speak to that and acknowledges it. Then the final thing, which is probably the hardest to quantify, and it’s the reason that it’s at the top of the last needs is grit, essentially. I know that’s a buzzword you hear a lot in the recruitment world for a lot of urban districts, but it’s someone who has a strong sense of perseverance and knows and understands the challenges ahead of them and is able to still take on the challenge.

Shared Perceptions of Best Determiner of Fit

A common theme that emerged during interviews was the belief that campuses are more capable of determining a candidate’s fit. One reason for this belief is that campus principals establish the campus’ vision and know the needs of the campus, so a principal’s input must be included to establish a best fit. Central Staff Participant 4’s working definition of fit, “alignment between a school’s vision for change and identified needs and the competency and interest of a

particular teacher candidate,” is best assessed at the campus level with rigorous and fit aligned protocols. Central Staff Participant 4 stated that “different principals have different competencies or priorities that they’re screening for,” which is why the district utilizes the two-tier teacher selection model. With this two-tier teacher selection model, central staff provides principals with candidate information, and “then, principals are able to make hiring decisions and interview for the specific criteria that makes sense or that fits with their campus.” Table 5 represents the traits, organized by fit, that principals prioritize when they recruit and hire teachers. It includes the fit traits that principals prioritize when selecting a candidate for the job, their organization, the groups on campus and the environment. The table demonstrates that principals prioritize P-G fit and P-E fit when selecting a candidate.

Table 5

Fit Traits Prioritized by Principals

Person to Organization Fit	Person to Job Fit	Person to Group Fit	Person to Environment Fit
Ability to Meet High Expectations	Content Knowledge	Strengths/Weaknesses	Strong Mind Despite Circumstances
Commitment to Excellence	Leadership Skills	Ability to Collaborate	Growth Mindset
	Compassion for Children	Pet Peeves	Receptive to Feedback
		Interdependent	Cares about Kids
		Not Impressionable	Wants to Be Successful
		Good Vibe	Positive Attitude
		Match with Team	Willing to Work Hard/Work Long Hours
			Flexible
			Risk Taker

In addition to campus principals best understanding their needs, central staff cannot replicate the in-depth processes that campuses use to identify fit. Principal 2 spoke about the inability of a district's central staff to duplicate the work of campus leadership teams. Principal 2 also mentioned that the district's process to establish fit loses the human touch, which he stated is "vitally important because we're not asking them to manufacture widgets, we're asking them to work with children, and so I think the human touch is vitally important in the process."

Shared Perceptions of Person-Organization Fit and Person-Group Fit

Campus principals use their established vision, mission and values as anchors for establishing person-organization fit. Principal 4 works collaboratively with campus teachers to establish their core beliefs and values. The established values, which are engagement, student-centered instruction, creativity, commitment to excellence and data-driven instruction, are then used to recruit for the next year. Central Staff Participant 4 also uniquely uses these values to identify a candidate who is going to be a person-group (P-G) fit too, as the campus teacher retention rate is high.

Most of the principal participants used faculty members during the recruitment and interview process to help to screen a candidate for person-group fit. Principals value their teachers' opinions and understand the importance of maintaining the productive team dynamic that has been established. Principal 5 expressed the importance of not jeopardizing the group culture of her campus by stating, "We've worked too hard to assemble this team to have one person bring it down...bring the organization down." Principal 1 shared similar thoughts, and she expressed how she evaluates a candidate's person-group fit. Principal 1 stated:

I know my staff. I know their quirks. I know their strengths. I know their weaknesses, and I know that we're small and we have to do a lot of collaboration. So, one question that I

ask every interview is, ‘What irks you with your co-workers? What are some things that bother you that your co-workers do?’ ...I know that my staff has a certain culture and that’s just the way they are, they’re productive...but this candidate has answered a question and said that you know, there is a characteristic I cannot stand it when co-workers do this, it just drives me insane. Well, I don’t want to hire you in a place where I know that you’re going to be insane, because that’s something that my staff does on the regular.

Principal participants expressed that the teachers on their campuses have very high expectations. Principals involve teachers on interview committees because teachers are aware of the type of team member they prefer and the characteristics that the candidate must possess. Principal 4 explained his staff’s expectation and high requirements for person-group fit.

You can’t find people that are insecure or don’t have a growth mindset, because my staff, a lot of them are highly capable teachers, and they’ve been in the profession a while. They know that they’re talented. They need someone strong to go along with, and either that or then need someone that has a lot of potential and is very into knowing that they can grow. Because they kind of self-select...I had teachers when I first got here that the previous principal hired, and the teachers themselves were cutting them out before I even got around to them. They were done with them because they just weren’t willing to grow. And those teachers expected more from their colleagues than what they were offering.

Shared Perception of Most Important Fit, Person-Environment Fit

Person-environment fit emerged as the most important fit trait principals consider when they recruit and hire teachers. The following person-environment fit traits emerged as the most important: possesses a strong mind despite circumstances, has growth mindset, is receptive to feedback, cares about kids, desires to be successful, possesses positive attitude, has a willingness to work hard/work long hours, is flexible, and is a risk taker. Figure 6 represents the traits that the principals prioritize when recruiting and hiring teachers. Table 5 represents the prioritized traits categorized by fit.

Traits Principals Prioritize During Recruitment and Hiring

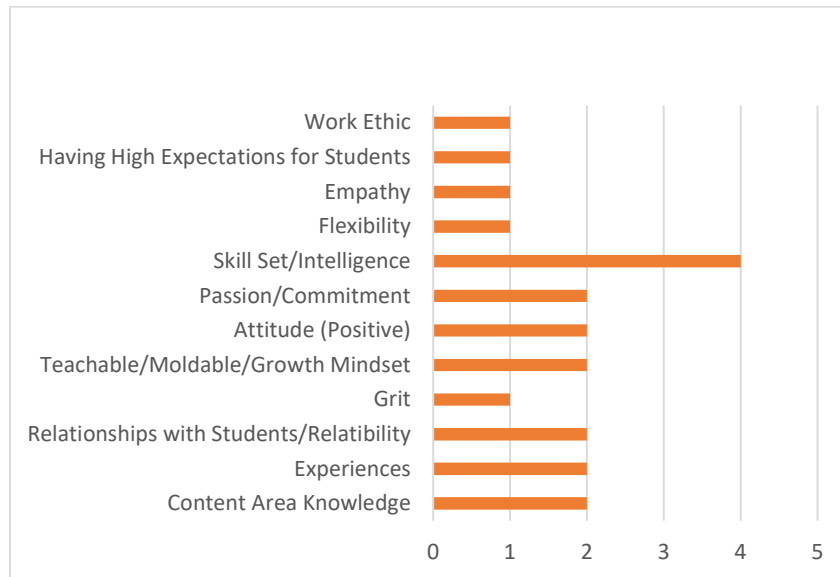


Figure 6. Traits prioritized by principals to recruit and hire teachers. The figure demonstrates some alignment between principals. Skill set/intelligence was the most highly prioritized trait.

To ensure P-E fit, during the candidate screening phase, principals paint a picture of challenging situations and the hard work necessary to flourish in an urban environment. Principal 2 tailors his interview techniques to the skills necessary for an urban environment. Principal 2 tries to acclimate candidates to what an urban setting will look like and observe their natural reactions for person-environment fit. Principal 2 stated that he has had candidates to admit that they are not a fit for an urban environment, and some candidates say, “Oh man. This is right up my wagon wheel, so to speak, and I’m really excited about that work.” Some principals reported structuring their interviews to present the candidate with a realistic picture and to highlight their high expectations.

Principal 6 stated that she tells candidates that:

We are a group of hard workers. We go above and beyond on many occasions, so if you are a ‘come in and just do your job and go home’ type of person, this is probably not the best fit for you because we are going to work hard.

Principal 4 also expresses to candidates that the expectations are high and the work is challenging. Principal 4 tells candidates that his campus has challenges like other campuses, but the hard work of the teachers is the difference maker. Principal 4 tells candidates, “We stay late. There are long hours and hard work. It’s rewarding, but it is the type of job where you’re really going to have to give it your all to survive here. We have a commitment to high expectations ...and excellence.” Table 6 features interview questions found in the interview protocol documents submitted by principals. The reported interview questions have been categorized by fit theory and CRP tenets.

Table 6

Interview Questions to Evaluate Fit at CRP Tenets

Interview Questions from Campus Principals	P-O Fit	P-J Fit	P-G Fit	P-E Fit	CRP- AA	CRP- CC	CRP- SC
There are national/state standards—TEKS in your subject. How do you determine exactly what to teach? Once you have determined what to teach, how do you teach?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How do you establish and support behavioral and academic expectations with your students?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How have you helped students with learning gaps achieve academic success in your classes?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What is your approach to classroom management and discipline?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Tell us about your personal high school academic preparation. Were you prepared for college academically? What would you share with first generation college students?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Describe your transition from high school to college and how could you use your experience to help students at Arborman Collegiate Academy?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What irks you most with co-workers? Supervisors?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Why are you good fit for this job and our school district?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What are three of your greatest strengths? Name three of your weaknesses.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What is the most satisfying thing about teaching?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Describe an example of when you used positive reinforcement.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How do you integrate technology into your lesson?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How do you have students use higher order thinking in your class? Give an example.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What are the techniques you use to teach besides direct instruction?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What do you do if the whole class is “not getting it”?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How do you connect your lessons to the “real world”?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Give us an example of how you communicate with other teachers in your department.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC

(table continues)

Interview Questions from Campus Principals	P-O Fit	P-J Fit	P-G Fit	P-E Fit	CRP- AA	CRP- CC	CRP- SC
How would you deal with an angry parent if they called you?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Give us an example of effective communication with an administrator.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Give an example of how you use differentiated instruction in a lesson.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How do you manage students with different reading abilities?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What is your classroom management plan, and what do you hope to accomplish with it?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What is the most challenging behavioral situation you have ever dealt with? How did you react?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What kind of students do you like to work with? What type of students could you teach most effectively?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
You give an assignment. A student ridicules the assignment, saying it doesn't make sense. What would you do?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How do you help students experience success?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How would you individualize instruction for students?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What procedures do you use to evaluate student progress besides using tests?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How would you challenge the slow learner and the advanced learner within the same class?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What kind of teachers would you prefer to work with? Why?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What quality or qualities do you have that would enhance our teaching staff?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What are some personality characteristics you find undesirable in people?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Who should be responsible for discipline in a school? Why?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What needs and/or expectations do you have the school administration?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How do you collaborate with your colleagues?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What do you feel is the most effective way to communicate with parents? Describe how you have used this/these techniques?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What community activities would you like to be associated with? Why?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Describe any school experience you have had, particularly in student teaching (or in another teaching position) that has prepared you for a full-time position at our school.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC

(table continues)

Interview Questions from Campus Principals	P-O Fit	P-J Fit	P-G Fit	P-E Fit	CRP- AA	CRP- CC	CRP- SC
Give an example of how you have used cooperative learning in your classroom.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What rules do you have for your classroom?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Describe your teaching style and how you accommodate the different learning styles of the students in your classes.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What do you consider to be your strengths and how will you use them in your teaching?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
In what ways do you keep students on task and well behaved during collaborative group activities?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What contributions can you make to our school?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How would a colleague describe you?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
As a teacher, how do you relate to students, colleagues, and parents?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Describe any specific areas of strength within your content area?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What sorts of assessment, both formal and informal, do you view as being important indicators of successful performance for students learning your content area?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
We have a large number of English learners in our district. What knowledge and experience do you have that is representative of your ability to teach English learners?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
In what ways, both formal and informal, might you assess a student with limited English fluency to be sure the student is truly learning the content of your course curriculum?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Discuss a curriculum project you developed which generated high motivation and engagement among your students. Tell us what the project looked like and what resources you used to develop it.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What kinds of strategies do you use to challenge students to have in-depth understanding of mathematics, science, and English literature?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What strategies do you use to make curriculum meaningful and relevant to students?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC

(table continues)

Interview Questions from Campus Principals	P-O Fit	P-J Fit	P-G Fit	P-E Fit	CRP- AA	CRP- CC	CRP- SC
Since we will be held accountable for standardized test results, what will you do in the area of curriculum development to ensure that students do well on test without teaching to the test?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Describe your ideas for ensuring that you have positive communication with parents and the larger community.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
How do you excel in working with students from diverse populations?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Why are you interested in working at this school?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What is the role/responsibility of the teacher in a classroom?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Tell us about a time when a student really got what you were hoping they would. An “Ah ha” moment.	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Why do you think students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds do not excel in school in comparison to more traditional students?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What kinds of things can be done to compensate for inadequacies in English or prior knowledge?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
Keith is your busy seventh-grader. He is constantly moving in your class and always ready to throw spitballs. Although his behavior is not seriously disruptive, it is annoying. He is especially active when he believes that you cannot see him. How would you deal with this situation?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC
What is the most challenging lesson you have had to teach, and how did you overcome the obstacles?	P-O	P-J	P-G	P-E	AA	CC	SC

Principal 4, like many of the principals interviewed, was committed to hiring just the right person for the job. Principal 4 stated that in the past, he has interviewed 25 people for one position. Principal 4 stated, that talent was the missing component. “They just couldn’t think deeply enough, and they weren’t capable of the analysis it would take to do the job” (Principal 4). Principal 5 also spoke about identifying the right person based on person-job, person-organization, and person-environment fit. Principal 5 stated that she has interviewed several candidates and determined that none of the candidates would add value to the campus. In this situation, the principal left the position vacant and depended heavily on the campus’ teacher assistants, who participated in professional development and professional learning communities.

Interview data revealed that both centralized and decentralized participants have shared perceptions of the traits necessary for a teacher to be successful in an urban district. All participants identified grit, understanding of the student population, ability to build relationships, and content knowledge. Participants deemed these traits necessary to endure the challenges of an urban district. The data also revealed a consensus that principals are the best determiners of fit for their campuses. Principals have insight on campus vision, mission, student needs, and teacher population. To assess a candidate’s fit, campus principals use interview protocols, including model lessons, role-plays, multiple rounds of interviews, and group panel interviews. Principals paint a realistic picture of challenging work situations, long hours, and group dynamics for candidates. If fit cannot be determined, principals have interviewed multiple candidates, and in some cases, left a position vacant.

The Role of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The findings related to the role of culturally relevant pedagogy in the district's recruitment and hiring practices are catalogued into two themes: The Value of Tenets and Lack of Measurable Methods. Theme 5, The Value of Tenets, primarily reports findings about the CRP values of principals and how principals gauge a candidate's CRP capacity in decentralized practices. Theme 6, Lack of Measurable Methods, discusses findings regarding the district's lack of methods to measure a candidate's CRP capacity. Theme 6 highlights the superficial ways CRP is assessed at the decentralized and centralized level. In Theme 6 participants express potential ideas for measuring CRP.

Theme 5: The Value of Tenets

Value of Academic Achievement

During the interviews, principals were asked to identify important CRP values that they consider when hiring a teacher. Principals were provided a list and were asked to explain their selected values. As it relates to academic achievement, the most commonly reported values, listed respectively, are: 1) the evidence of ability to implement a student-centered classroom, including classroom management, engagement and curriculum; 2) communicating that students can be successful in spite of their circumstance; 3) ensuring students have access to rigorous curriculum; and 4) a belief that students are capable of success. Figure 7 provides a visual that represents principals' hiring values related to the CRP tenet, academic expectations.

The evidence of ability to implement a student-centered classroom directly aligns with the principals' prioritization of a candidate's skill set and level of content knowledge. Principals also expressed strong desires to have teachers who demonstrated the ability to inspire students to

be successful despite their circumstances. Principal 1 shared that the ability to motivate students to be successful is a necessity for the context of her school, an early college high school.

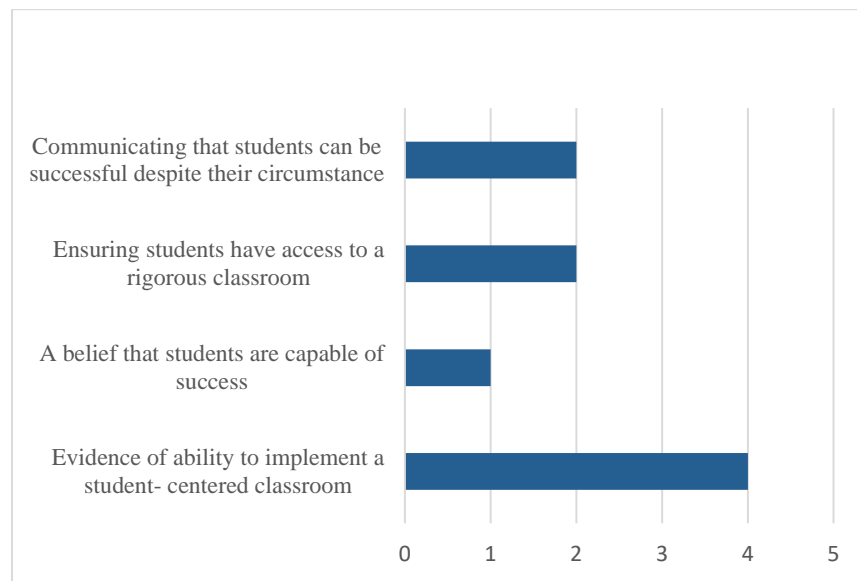


Figure 7. Principals' culturally relevant pedagogy recruitment and hiring values: academic achievement.

Principal 1 elaborated on the point by stating:

This is particularly important at the early college high school because again, these are students who otherwise might not have the opportunity, and so it needs to be a consistent communication, the students can do well, they can succeed. Like our motto is, "College Success and College Access for All."

Principal 6 identified that the ability for a candidate to communicate that students can be successful in spite of circumstances is essential, particularly since this value aligns with their school's motto and daily affirmations to students. Principal 6 stated:

It doesn't matter what your background is but where you are in building, where you are to get to where you want to go, or where you need to go. I think it's important that students have that exposure, that they are constantly reminded and told that they can be and can do. We have an affirmation that we say here on a daily basis. The affirmation ends with, 'I can and I will'... they internalize that. My hope is that when they leave these walls, and they go beyond in the world that they will always remember that they can and they will.

Value of Cultural Competence

Principals expressed a strong value in a candidate's cultural competence. Principals identified and prioritized a candidate's ability to change curriculum based on critical reflection and student input. Principals equally value a candidate's ability to be actively involved in the community, ensure equitable experiences and outcomes in the classroom, and allow students to play an active role in decision-making to ensure relevance and reflection of realities. Figure 8 represents the cultural competence values that principals consider when hiring.

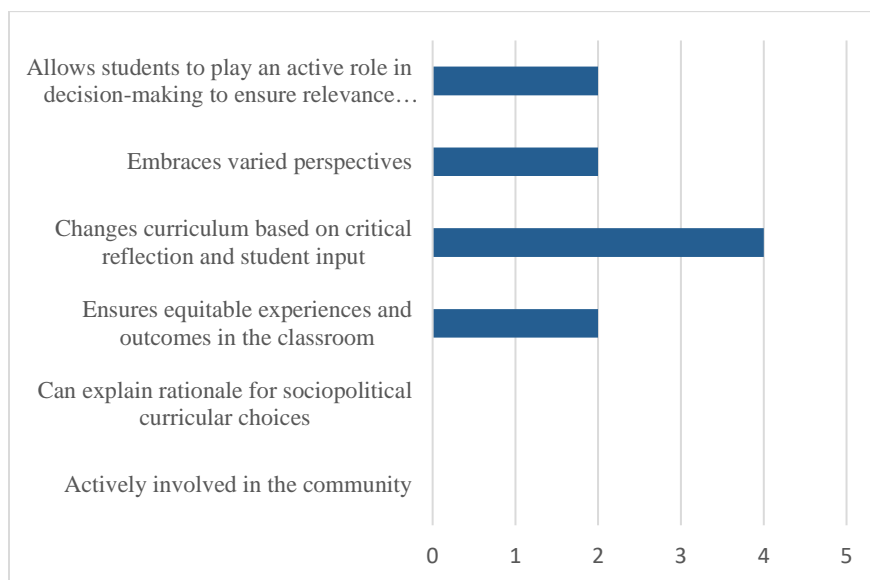


Figure 8. Principals' culturally relevant pedagogy recruitment and hiring values: cultural competence.

Principal 6 stated that it is important for teachers to be able to reflect daily on their classroom data. Principal 6 believes that is important for a candidate to be able to assess the mood, student progress and students' comfort with the subject matter, and then to make adjustments if necessary. Principal 3 desires candidates that are reflective and humble enough to listen to student feedback. Principal 3 stated, "Making sure students have a voice in the classroom is essential to have in a culturally relevant classroom because... you want to have

their voice so you can engage them, so they can be active participants in the learning.”

Additionally, Principal 3 said, “When a teacher is able to not only be reflective, but then to step aside and take feedback from a student because they’re the ones who have to receive this information, I think that’s paramount.”

Principal 2 expressed similar thoughts and added that reflection and student input is necessary for student learning to occur. Principal 2 believes that when students have “voice and choice...it is giving students an entry point into the learning. And that actually solidifies the learning for the student.” Although Principal 2 values student input, he strongly opposed making drastic changes to the curriculum.

The curriculum is what it is. We can look at extension and enrichment opportunities with the curriculum, but the curriculum is as it stands, and our students have to be able to achieve at those levels. And so, I don’t think just because you don’t like the game, you get to change it, get to change the rules.

Principal 4 agrees with Principal 6. Principal 4 believes that changing the curriculum is unrealistic in “the world of annual high stakes testing that we live in.” Principal 4 also added that “the state test is not culturally proficient...so those practices, while it might be good in the classroom for kids at the moment, they’re not going to be able to pass high stakes assessments.”

Value of Sociopolitical Consciousness

A candidate’s ability to inspire and help students take action against injustice emerged as the most important sociopolitical consciousness value. The following values were all prioritized equally: 1) ensures students understand how to navigate inequitable systems; 2) aligns content and assessments with students’ cultural capital; and 3) advocates for students by challenging bias, discrimination, and inequities. Figure 9 represents what principals value related to the CRP tenet, sociopolitical consciousness.

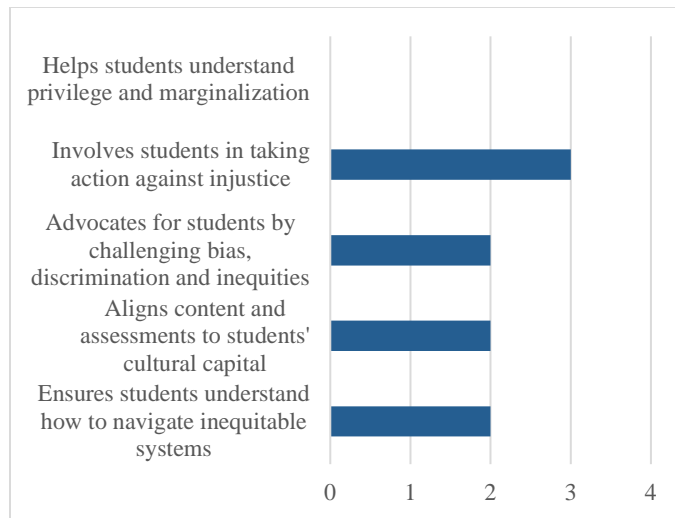


Figure 9. Principals' culturally relevant pedagogy recruitment and hiring values: sociopolitical consciousness.

Principals expressed that a candidate's ability to motivate students to take action against injustice was valued. Principals cited valuing a candidate who is able to engage students in taking action by learning about current events, writing letters, watching the news and teaching students how to peacefully protest. Principal 4 stated that it is important to help "kids feel like they've made a difference in helping others and doing the right thing." Principals also value a candidate's understanding of inequitable systems and helping students to learn and navigate those systems. Principal 1 explained that it is important for a candidate to be able to help students to understand why inequities exist and how to navigate the systems to achieve success. Principal 1 stated:

You can teach them why. Well okay after you understand why, then what? I would rather the time be spent on how do you navigate this system that might not change in your lifetime. So, how can I assure that you're successful and able to navigate the system as is. Whether it changes or gets better, you know how to function in this system. So again, it's equipping the students with the tools they will need for success.

Elementary school principals strongly valued a candidate's ability to focus on positivity and not "lack." Principal 4 explained that his campus does not address privilege and marginalization. Principal 4 stated, "I wouldn't want to bring that to their attention unnecessarily

or make them think that they're marginalized. We try and make them think that they can do anything in the world." Principal 5 echoed similar opinions. Principal 5 stated, "We don't really talk about it. I don't think we need to constantly remind them of the struggle...We're trying to build unity here, not separation."

Both elementary and secondary principals valued a candidate's ability to utilize students' cultural capital in the learning process. Principal 5 seeks out candidates that can provide students with a well-rounded education, while valuing their culture and language. Principal 5 stated:

Valuing kids' home language, things like that are important...kids need to understand that this is your home language; it is valuable, but you need to be able to code switch, just because when you go into the workforce. I'm not saying it's right, but I'm saying it's going to happen. You're going to be judged if you don't have it.

Principal 3 agreed and believes that it is important that candidates understand the value of students' cultural capital and the importance of students "buying into what you're trying to teach them. It's something that they can relate to, something that they have experiences with."

The human resources' process focuses primarily on providing information to inform a principal about a candidate's potential fit; campus principals evaluate the cultural relevancy of a candidate. The campus hiring processes primarily focus on assessing a candidate's ability to exhibit cultural competence. Assessment of candidate's ability to hold students to high expectations and achieve academic success is evident in the interview questions that were submitted, but during the interviews, principals did not focus on academic expectations and sociopolitical consciousness.

Principals tended to gauge a candidate's cultural competence by evaluating responses when asked about working with a particular student population. Principal 6 asks questions that assess whether candidates are culturally connected to the students that they will serve. Principals

view model lessons with actual students as the best method of determining a connection between students and candidates.

Principals hone-in closely as candidates respond to questions about student populations. Principals listen intently for revelations about a candidate's belief system. Principal 5 didn't have specific questions to assess cultural competence, but she stated, "We definitely try to get a feel for what their belief systems are based on how they talk about kids. We have some red flags, 'those kids,' you can tell how people feel the same or do they feel like an outside entity." Principal 4 also pays close attention to a candidate's responses about students and whether the candidate delivers a textbook answer.

We ask questions regarding what the different demographics would be... Sometimes you have people, and they'll be like, "Oh, I don't care. I love all kids." And while that might be a good textbook-type answer, it shows that they're not really that culturally responsive because if you're a Caucasian girl from High Garden Park, while that might be a great response, how are you going to relate with a classroom full of all African-American boys if that is the class, and plan lessons that are going to be highly effective for them? So, while it sounds good to say, 'Oh, I love all children equally,' that wasn't the question we were asking. We were asking, 'What questions do you have about the demographics of your class' to see where your mindset is, to understand that it does matter to kids.

Principal 1 evaluates a candidate's educational background and high school experience as an indicator of a candidate's cultural competence. Principal 1 asks specifically about a candidate's high school to college transition and whether the candidate's high school prepared him/her for college. Principal 1 probes the candidate about their freshman year and the challenges they encountered. These questions probe a candidate's cultural competence and ability to understand the mission of the campus, which is to create a college-going culture. Principal 1 explained the reason for these questions and the need for a candidate to be able to relate.

These kids are doing their freshman year in high school, and freshman year at college at the same time. So, if you have no frame of reference or understanding of how difficult

that can be for the majority of adolescents, then you might not be able to understand what these students are going through. They might not even be able to develop relationships with the students.

During the interviews, principals spoke more about cultural competence, but the interview artifacts indicate that principals view the CRP tenet, academic achievement, as a priority as well. An analysis of the campus-based interview questions revealed that principals probe candidates about how they establish academic expectations for all students and how they help struggling students, specifically students with reading disabilities and ELL students to achieve success. Principals use interview questions that hone in on whether a candidate can differentiate instruction to aid in student success. Interview questions also addressed if a candidate utilizes multiple ways to evaluate students' progress and even if the candidate teaches beyond standardized tests. A full list of interview questions can be found in Table 6.

Although principals identified a candidate's ability to engage students in taking action against injustice as a valued CRP teacher trait, assessing a candidate's sociopolitical consciousness was rarely mentioned during interviews. Principal 5 alluded to examining a candidate's sociopolitical consciousness. She mentioned the importance of teachers being able to converse with students about current events and issues that impact students. Principal 5 referenced the days after the 2016 election and how essential it was for faculty members to understand "that your [the students] community feels isolated, you have to have a staff that can push those kids forward." Principal 5 also stated that her staff:

Talked a lot about giving kids space to talk about it and what kind of lessons can we plan around it...so it's important that when I put people on the staff...you need to be able to get with me when we're trying to talk to kids about what's happening to them.

Aside from Principal 5's comment, the value of the sociopolitical consciousness tenet was not expressed as much by principals. Upon analysis of interview documents, only two

questions in Table 6 loosely probed candidates about sociopolitical consciousness. These questions were structured to probe candidates about the community activities in which they want to be involved and about communicating with the parents and the larger community.

Interview data and submitted interview questions reveal that principals value the CRP tenets, academic achievement and cultural competence. Principals valued candidates' ability to implement a student-centered classroom and use critical reflection and student input to make changes to the curriculum. Though principals desired candidates who could make changes to the curriculum, concerns arose regarding the impact of making curricular changes that would impact student performance on standardized test. These two tenets are most evident in interview questions. Sociopolitical consciousness is only referenced in two campus interview protocol questions. Only one principal referenced the need to hire a teacher who can understand when a community feels isolated and how to support students through lessons and conversations.

Theme 6: Lack of Measurable Methods of Assessment

A reoccurring theme that emerged was that centralized/district-level nor decentralized/campus-level have a standard method of assessing CRP. The methods that are used superficially or partially assess the CRP tenets. Centralized participants cited the short answer question and the submission of student data as a means for assessing the CRP tenets, academic achievement and cultural competence. Central Staff Participant 3 acknowledged that the district's current recruitment practices and selection model do not address the third CRP tenet, a candidate's social political consciousness.

I think part of it we do pretty well and part of it we don't, to be honest. I think the first part where you're talking about student growth, those are the questions that we ask as part of the application process. We try. We ask questions like have you worked with diverse

students and can you prove to us that you helped them grow? With the latter part, with helping them address social injustices and things like that, we don't do that at all.

Central Staff Participant 5 also conceded that embracing students' cultures and raising cultural awareness regarding social issues are not factors in the process, but Central Staff Participant 5 believes there is room for growth. Central Staff Participant 5 stated, "I think that we are coming to a place now as a district where a lot of people in different areas are recognizing that we need to do some things differently from a diversity and equity standpoint."

Central Staff Participant 3 stated that he and his team commonly discuss how to make practices better in terms of diversity and addressing social injustices, but he admitted that this is particularly challenging to include. Central Staff Participant 3 stated:

It's something that we as a team discuss a lot. And we're always thinking of ways that we can recruit better in terms of assessing diversity and having those kinds of conversations. But as of right now, it's very, very, very limited.

During the interview, Central Staff Participant 3 considered how to incorporate this aspect into the application in the form of an essay question, but he believes adding a social justice question may not be a reliable measure. Central Staff Participant 3 stated, "If we put something in there of how would you teach students about social justice...they're going to write what they think we expect...You can't really trust that."

Central Staff Participants see the value and need of having a screener specifically for CRP tenets. Central Staff Participants also believe that in order for a CRP based selection assessment or screener to be created or used, the district would have to declare CRP an organizational priority. Central Staff Participant 4 believes there has to be a "consensus that this is an emphasis, over and above other things." Central Staff Participant 4 also stated that when or if CRP becomes a priority, there are options for embedding CRP tenets into centralized and decentralized hiring models.

I think to the extent that there's a great culturally relevant pedagogy screener that's available and written screener or online screeners are a cut above...it's difficult for those to consistently predict effectiveness across the board, but if there's a good one replacing the EPI...maybe putting in a culturally relevant pedagogy screener there, maybe pushing standardized interview protocols to the campus level, or a couple standardized questions or saying every campus-based selection process must include this ethic strand competency.

Central staff participants also believe that there would need to be further research to ensure that CRP tenets are true measures for success. Central Staff Participant 2 emphasized the importance of conducting more research in a CRP based selection model to have objective data and research to guide decision making.

In a similar vein, decentralized, campus-level participants expressed a desire to have a way to assess a candidate using CRP. A standard method for assessing CRP at the campus level was not evident. Campus principals tended to casually assess CRP tenets in general interview questions. Some principals admitted not being as familiar with CRP or with ways to assess a candidate's CRP capacity. Principal 1 stated that she did not have a good way to measure the cultural relevancy capacity of a potential teacher. Principal 2 agreed that it is important to measure CRP capacity and wishes there was a proven method. Principal 2 stated, "I almost wish that there was a way for me to develop a rubric for that and maybe there's something out there. I don't know if there is or there's not, but I certainly don't want to base it on gut."

Arborman School District's recruitment and hiring practices lack a standardized way to measure a candidate's CRP capacity. The current selection model superficially assesses a candidate's cultural competency via the short essay questions and a candidate's academic expectations using the candidate's past student achievement data. Centralized participants realize that processes need to be revamped to be more inclusive of CRP, but identify challenges in assessing tenets, especially sociopolitical consciousness. Centralized participants identified

more CRP hiring research, a CRP screener or CRP standardized interview questions as areas for further exploration. Some principals stated that they did not have a good way to measure CRP, and one decentralized participant desired a tool or a rubric to help him assess a candidate's CRP capacity.

Perceived Value of Fit Theory and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The findings related to the perceived value of utilizing the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy tenets in hiring practices is reported in Theme 7, Intersecting Values of Fit and CRP. Theme 7 includes findings that specify the value of both theories found in campus-level interview questions. In addition to value in campus-level processes, centralized participants indicate the potential value of these two theories could positively impact the ability to establish fit, which could lead to increased teacher retention and better service to students.

Theme 7: Intersecting Values of Fit and CRP

Principals and central staff participants' interview responses and submitted artifacts indicate that there is a perception that incorporating the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy tenets into recruitment and hiring practices could help better establish fit for campuses, leading to increased retention. Campus interview protocol questions indicate that principals mostly ask fit questions that target a candidate's P-J fit, P-E fit, and P-G fit. Principals also ask questions that indicate a value in the candidate's capacity to hold students to high academic achievement and exhibit cultural competence. Many of the fits and CRP tenets overlap in questions, such as the P-J fit and Academic Achievement and P-E fit and Cultural Competence. Questions such as, "How do you establish and support behavioral and academic expectations

with your students?” and “What kind of students do you like to work with? What type of students could you teach most effectively?” gauge a candidate’s P-J fit and CRP tenet, Academic Achievement capabilities and a candidate’s P-E fit and CRP tenet, Cultural competence capabilities indicating principals intuitively value both theories. See the list of interview questions and aligned fit theory tenets and CRP tenets in Table 6.

Central Staff Participant 3 believes that there is immense value in using the fit theory and CRP tenets to help principals build their campus’ selection model based on the cultural relevance necessary to meet the demands of the campus environment. Central Staff Participant 3 stated:

Arborman is an incredibly segregated city. The cultural piece varies widely, vastly from campus to campus and from regions of the city. It is really important for principals to really get down to the values and the things that really define their specific campus environment and campus culture and to be able to really effectively screen for that.

The incorporation of the fit theory and the CRP tenets is viewed as valuable as it relates to recruiting and hiring teachers who are able to meet the unique needs of urban school students. Central Staff Participant 5 stated every decision made, including the decision to revise the selection model to include the fit theory and CRP tenets, “should be guided by the question, ‘How does this help or benefit the students in the best way?’”

Central staff participant 5 indicated that the addition of these theories is “just one of the best possible ways for us to make sure that our students are given the best opportunities to succeed with people who want to be working with them in the ways they need every day.” Central Staff Participant 5 further added that the use of these two theories could allow the district to market itself to attract teachers for “the schools who tend to suffer more from not having the right people in the right places, which leads to high turnover rates.”

Central Staff Participant 3 also believes using the two theories could lead to the district’s ability to pull a major lever and impact retention.

The better the cultural fit, the more the teacher is likely to feel plugged in to the campus from earlier on. The more they are, I guess, more aware of the challenges. So, it says that they have the right expectation going into their teaching position, and it creates more longevity, so we don't have as much turnover. When teachers have the right expectations and when they are a better cultural fit for the district and the specific campus, you're just going to see someone jumping in and able to perform, I think, at a faster rate. And they'll be retained at a higher rate.

Participants acknowledge that there is great value in using both the fit theory and the tenets of CRP tenets. Interview documents reveal that there is overlap with P-J fit and academic achievement and P-E fit and cultural competence, so there is value in using both theories. Centralized participants cited potential values which include identifying teachers capable of providing students with the necessary supports, helping establish cultural fit early, and retaining teachers.

Summary

The results presented in this chapter include the discovery, analysis and interpretation of a multitude of data provided via thematic content analysis of interview responses from district and campus participants. Submitted recruitment and hiring artifacts, including application essay questions, application rubrics, application pre-work, and campus interview questions, were analyzed for triangulation purposes and for theme formation. This study identified seven themes related to the four research questions.

Analysis of the data revealed two themes related to the district's current recruitment and hiring practices. Centralized recruitment decisions are driven by the district's needs, including a demand for bilingual teachers and teachers for high needs campuses. Recruitment decisions are also driven by needs communicated by principals. District data, teacher pipeline yield, and pipeline performance data are analyzed and used to target recruitment areas and pipelines to fill

vacancies. In the current processes, central staff is viewed primarily as information providers. The recruitment and screening protocols gather and provide principals with information related to a candidate's credentials, Teacher Match EPI score, experience, and data analysis capabilities. Central staff provides principals with information directly related to a candidate's P-J and P-E fit through the application screening process. The district uses teacher effectiveness as a means of providing P-O fit. P-O fit is an area that was identified as needing more definition in the selection model process. Though central staff provides P-E fit information through the EPI score, principals are unaware of what the scores mean.

The decentralized, campus-based selection practices vary with each principal, but a reoccurring theme was that principals did not utilize many of the supports offered by central staff. Instead, principals relied on their own networks to find candidates. Principals did not indicate utilizing the pre-work obtained at the central level. Principals' primary contact with central staff involved requesting a candidate list by vacancy and submitting candidate's names at the point of recommendation.

Data analysis revealed that the fit theory does play a role in the district's recruitment and hiring practices. Centralized and decentralized participants shared the same perspectives regarding the P-E fit qualities necessary for teachers in an urban district. Both centralized and decentralized participants believe that campus principals best determine P-G, P-O and P-E fit because principals understand their campus' vision, mission, and needs. Principals incorporate other faculty members to help them to assess fit.

Culturally relevant pedagogy tenets are evident in the district's recruitment and hiring practices. Principals were asked to identify values aligned with each CRP value that was important to consider when selecting a candidate. Campus principals identified the following

CRP values as the most important: the ability to implement a student-centered classroom, the ability to change the curriculum based on critical reflection and student input, and the ability to involve students in taking action against injustice. Campus interview protocols and responses were analyzed and cultural competence emerged as the most assessed CRP value. An analysis of interview protocols revealed that academic achievement is frequently referenced in interview questions, and sociopolitical consciousness was referenced in only two campus interview questions. Overall, the district lacked a standard method for assessing a candidate's CRP capacity, but principals asserted there is a demand for a tool to assess a candidate's CRP capacity.

After analysis, the data revealed that both decentralized and centralized participants find value in using the fit theory and CRP in recruitment and hiring processes. The artifact analysis revealed that principals incorporate both theories through their interview questions. Central staff participants believe that there is value in incorporating the theories more. They believe these theories could help better establish cultural fit, especially for more challenging campuses, and a deeper cultural fit alignment could result in higher retention.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

As student populations become increasingly more diverse, teachers must be selected and prepared to be culturally responsive. Brown-Jeffy et al. (2012) state teachers bridge gaps between a students' home and school. It is imperative for teachers to have an internal desire to serve students of diverse backgrounds and understand how to provide curricular instruction that connects to students' culture. While much attention has been focused on hiring models, mentoring and induction as primary modes of solving this problem; there has been a gap in the research regarding the intentional recruitment and hiring of culturally responsive teachers. Existing research has explored this issue through isolated theories, including the fit theory or the professional shift theory (Hatt et al., 2013). This research study evaluated the union of two theories, the fit theory and the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy, to examine recruitment and hiring of culturally responsive teachers in an urban district.

The purpose of this study was to examine an urban district's current recruitment and hiring practices to determine if the district's practices incorporated the fit theory and CRP tenets into how teachers are recruited, identified and selected. It was also the purpose of this study to explore the perceived value of incorporating the fit theory and CRP tenets into recruitment and hiring practices. This study adds to the literature and provides guidance to districts in evaluating their current practices and retooling district resources to be more inclusive of the fit theory and CRP tenets as tools to identify the 'right' teacher, a culturally responsive teacher.

This qualitative exploratory case study was conducted in Arborman School District, an urban district located in Texas, in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the current recruitment and hiring practices established in one urban school district?
2. What role does the fit theory have in the district's recruitment and hiring practices?
3. What role do the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy have in the district's recruitment and hiring practices?
4. What is the perceived value of using the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy in recruitment and hiring practices?

The method of data collection used to answer these questions involved interviews of centralized and decentralized district participants. Participants also submitted documents related to their recruitment and hiring processes. Interview responses and documents were analyzed and coded to identify themes related to the conceptual framework and research questions.

Through the above methods, it was discovered that the district's central staff uses a variety of district data to guide recruitment, screening and hiring decisions. Data were used to assess pipelines yield, performance data and campus needs, and potential vacancy demands. Central staff, the district's human resources department, primarily serves as information providers by providing relevant information to principals to assist with the screening of potential candidates before the interview process begins. This process has evolved so that central staff is not viewed as gate keepers. The information provided by the district's human resources department includes the EPI assessment, which assesses a candidate's attitudinal factors, cognitive abilities and pedagogical abilities. Once equipped with the information provided by central staff, principals engage in various hiring processes that rarely involve the human resources department until the point of candidate recommendation. Information given to principals is used to guide their hiring decisions, as they have autonomy to hire teachers for their campuses.

Findings also revealed that the district's human resources department provides principals with relevant information regarding a candidate's P-J and P-E fit. The candidate's P-J and P-E fit is assessed through the application screening process, which includes the EPI screener and short answer questions. The district has not clearly defined the role of P-O fit in the recruitment and hiring processes, but the most related connection of identifying P-O fit is based on the district's definition of effective teaching. Centralized and decentralized participants shared the same perspectives regarding the P-E fit qualities necessary for teachers in an urban district, but both sets of participants believe that principals have the campus contextual knowledge to best determine P-G, P-O and P-E fit.

Finally, culturally relevant pedagogy tenets were evident in the district's recruitment and hiring practices. Principals identified the following CRP values as the most important when hiring a candidate: the ability to implement a student-centered classroom, the ability to change the curriculum based on critical reflection and student input, and the ability to involve students in taking action against injustice. Through data sources, cultural competence emerged as the most assessed and valued CRP tenet. An analysis of interview protocols revealed that academic achievement is frequently referenced in interview questions, and sociopolitical consciousness was referenced in only two campus interview questions. The district does not have a standard method for assessing a candidate's CRP capacity, but principals expressed an interest in a CRP assessment or rubric.

The finding that emerged regarding the perceived value of CRP and the fit theory in recruitment and hiring practices is that the use of both theories is recognized as valuable for establishing fit, teacher retention, and students. An analysis of campus-based interview questions revealed that principals recognize the value of assessing a candidate's fit and CRP capacity.

Central staff participants identified that incorporating these theories aid in establishing fit, which could lead to better teacher retention. Participants also indicated that these theories would be valuable when trying to establish fit to better support students at high needs campuses.

The intent of viewing this research in the context of this framework was to allow for deeper understanding of the complexity of hiring teachers who are a true ‘fit’ for urban students, the characteristics that culturally responsive teachers display and the methods and difficulties associated with identifying these teachers during the recruitment and screening processes. The findings of this study are significant, as this study not only addressed fit, but also addressed the CRP teacher capacity in hiring practices and the most important values to principals. This study revealed shared perspectives and understanding of urban teacher qualities, while simultaneously exposing a disconnect between central staff efforts and campus level efforts. The findings highlighted in this study prompt district human resource departments and principals to evaluate their processes, align on recruitment and hiring structures, and engage in two-way communication that goes beyond making content matches, but rather making student-teacher matches for urban school students. Below are the salient points of my research study and how they connect to prior research.

Findings Connected to Prior Research

Urban School Challenges and Teachers Fit for Urban School Environment

Existing literature highlights the reality that urban schools face unique challenges, including lack of funding, decaying facilities, personnel shortages, and a lack of experienced and committed teachers (Jacob, 2007; Alonso et al., 2009). Urban schools and low performing schools struggle to attract teachers and at times, urban schools attract candidates with weaker

qualifications and abilities (Papa & Baxter, 2008). Centralized and decentralized participants in this study acknowledge these challenges and intentionally seek teachers who exhibit intrinsic characteristics that will help acclimate them to urban environments and accelerate their success. Characteristics such as intelligence, grit, resourcefulness and an ability to connect with students are viewed as essential and highly prioritized by principals. Both centralized and decentralized principals attempt to assess a candidate's potential for success in an urban environment. Centralized processes place value on a candidate's past work history with diverse communities and a documented history of academic student achievement. Essentially, through the use of these criteria, an ideal urban teacher would have a record of past success working with students from diverse communities. In an effort to have an information-rich process, principals gauge a teacher's capability to be successful in an urban environment using panel interviews, feedback sessions, reality-based scenarios and model lessons with students. This finding, while not completely unique, contradicts some studies, in which teachers were offered jobs based on resumes or without demonstrating any evidence of future success (Cannata et al., 2017). The principals in this study display more intentionality with their processes, and display characteristics associated with "high-use principals" (p. 195). High-use principals are principals who draw upon multiple sources to inform their hiring processes. Cannata et al. (2017) states that high-use principals use effectiveness data, demonstration lessons, lesson evaluation, the use of hiring committees, and post observation conferences as tools in their campus-based selection model.

Principals attempt to be intentional in their processes assessing a candidate's belief systems, content knowledge, relationship building abilities, and instructional delivery style. Principals are gathering as much possible data as possible to determine if the teacher is going to

be able to grow in the environment and become acclimated in an environment where feedback about performance is the norm. Lesson planning abilities, instructional approaches, and interpersonal skills are being evaluated through the multiple selection model processes employed by principals in this study.

Echoing the findings of existing literature, principals in this study understand the unique context of their campus and the distinctive needs of students. Matsko et al. (2014) asserted that students have different beliefs about schools, including some negative beliefs that urban school teachers must be prepared to address. Hence, the decentralized processes highlighted in this study emphasized a teacher's intrinsic skills. Most study participants agreed that urban teachers must be able to meet students where they are and provide them with access points for mainstream education. Principals attached a high importance to a candidate's ability to connect and stay in tune with their student population. Thus, teaching in an urban school requires teachers to have the ability to relate to students, build connections with students and learn about students' cultures. These findings have important consequences for the broader conversation regarding cultural competence. Milner (2010) stresses "the importance of teachers developing cultural competence to maximize learning opportunities (p.69)." In agreement with Milner's assertion that teachers must view students' culture as an asset and use it in curriculum planning and implementation, principals expressed a value in teachers who can connect student input and students' cultures into lessons and make changes to the curriculum. Four out of the six interviewed principals emphasized a desire for teachers who incorporate student voice and choice in their classrooms.

While principals desired teachers who can integrate students' cultures into the curriculum, the pressures of annual high stakes testing cause conflict and hesitation in curriculum

changes. According to Bishop et al. (2011), urban students tend to experience more struggles, have more learning needs, and possess some deficiencies. At high needs schools, there tends to be an intense focus on the standardized test. This study's findings echoed the literature and indicated that a school's emphasis on testing results in student culture integration taking a backseat in the learning process. According to one principal's belief, the state-mandated test makes changing the curriculum unrealistic, which impacts a teacher's ability to incorporate student input and cultures. Another principal believed that the curriculum can be supplemented, but the content is pretty rigid. The findings in this study demonstrate why student culture is often excluded.

This finding also expressed why CRP and culturally competent teachers are necessary in an urban district. According to Khalifa (2013), cultural responsiveness is vital in urban schools. Khalifa states that there is "a strong need for educational curriculum and practice to respond to the specific academic, cultural, and social needs of culturally unique, minoritized students" (p. 64). When teachers are able to embrace and utilize students' cultures, students learn that they "need not give up their cultural identity in order to achieve academically. Rather, meeting high academic expectations is more possible when teachers promote children's cultural competence" (Morrison et al., 2008). The exclusion of culture is problematic and speaks to the role of the leader to be culturally responsive. Khalifa et al. (2016) states, "School leaders are responsible for ensuring that their teachers are culturally responsive and that the vision of the school imbues cultural responsiveness" (p. 1287). This vision includes a focus on cultural competence, even in the face of high stakes testing.

Study findings revealed that principals placed a high value on a candidate's intelligence, content knowledge and teaching skill sets. These skills directly align to the focus on testing and

the teacher's ability to attain high test scores. As principals recruit teachers and make contact with human resources' staff, they place an emphasis on a teacher's content certification and prior teaching experience. Skills that principals identify as necessary for success in an urban school environment are not communicated to the central office. The lack of communication regarding intrinsic traits necessary for urban school success does not align with principals' teacher capacity beliefs and does not provide the central human resources department with information to tailor their processes to be more reflective of campus' needs. This is an area of potential improvement in practice and an area of exploration for future research.

Impact of Low Quality Education on Urban Student Achievement

As urban schools experience the challenge of teacher shortages, ineffective teaching and low student achievement tend to plague traditionally underserved and high needs schools (Jacob, 2007). These schools tend to be staffed with less effective teachers. In this study, centralized processes attempt to utilize achievement data to ensure that high performing teachers are hired. The district awards points on the application rubric for evidence of previous student achievement. In order to increase the likelihood of hiring an effective teacher, the human resources team monitors and analyzes the effectiveness of newly hired teachers using the teacher evaluation system. Data is then correlated to the candidates' respective universities and alternative certification programs. Pipelines that have the highest yield of effective teachers are targeted for future recruitment efforts. This practice supports recent literature exploring data-driven talent solutions, in which central office personnel support principals with integrating data into their hiring processes. Grissom et al. (2017) cite districts that use data to help principals

assess hiring needs, explore the candidate pool, analyze candidate's effectiveness data and plan professional development for newly hired teachers.

The Connection between Fit Theory and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Hiring Practices

This research study sought to determine if there was evidence of the use of the fit theory and CRP tenets in processes. Research shows culturally responsive teachers have a profound impact and produce favorable outcomes for urban and minority students (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Ladson-Billings thoughtfully expressed the traits of culturally responsive teachers in the CRP tenets and underpinnings, all of which are aid in success in urban schools. Findings indicated that there is evidence of these two theories in existing district practices and though vague, a perceived value in using these theories. Interview responses suggest that being a culturally responsive teacher is critical to the success of urban students and is inextricably linked to being a fit for an urban environment.

As indicated by interview responses and document analysis, the human resources department primarily focuses on providing information regarding P-J fit, "the relationship between a person's characteristics and those of the job or tasks that are performed at work" (Kristoff-Brown et al, 2005, p. 284), which is reflective of the literature regarding the roles of central office (Bishop et al., 2011). P-J fit information is the most common fit used in principals' communication with central staff. The EPI assessment is used to screen for P-E fit, the fit between an individual and the demands and resources of the work environment (Kristoff-Brown et al., 2005). The EPI assessment provides principals with a data point regarding the teacher's characteristics. Principals use the EPI scores at a superficial level or not at all, indicating a lack of understanding of the screener. In addition to P-E fit, the EPI assessment evaluates a

candidate's P-J fit. The EPI assessment asks questions about a candidate's ability to plan lessons, depth of standard knowledge and ability to establish routines. The EPI and application pre-work also probes a candidate to determine the extent to which a candidate can be responsive to student needs and adjust instruction. Although principals are unfamiliar with the EPI assessment and do not report reviewing the application pre-work, campus-based interview questions revealed that principals value these skills and recognize their importance. This is an indication that principals and central office share similar perceptions, and there is an opportunity to ensure that principals are educated on the wealth of information that they receive. Aligning with principals about available resources could alleviate some principal burden and enable principals to supplement their campus-level hiring practices with resources provided by the human resources department.

Principals and district staff agree about the traits necessary for an urban teacher. These traits draw clear intersections between the fit theory and the CRP tenets. Principals intuitively use both theories. Response data shows that principals identify P-J and P-E fits as the most important fit theory tenets. Study findings also indicate that principals value cultural competence and academic achievement as the most highly valued CRP tenets. In existing literature, urban schools have been characterized as challenging, and as environments where resilience and high expectations are a necessity (Alonso et al., 2009). Centralized screening processes primarily consider P-J fit by examining a candidate's education level and certification, while principals hone in on the "fit between the abilities of a person and the demands of the job" (Sekiguchi, 2004, p.184). Principals are examining a candidate's discipline management techniques, differentiation skill level, teaching style, and knowledge of instructional strategies. Principals essentially want to know, 'Does the candidate have the skills to do the job?' Content knowledge and skill emerged as the most important traits when principals are recruiting and hiring teachers.

Content knowledge and skill set are connected to a candidate's ability to produce high student academic achievement, a CRP tenet.

The skills that denote success and help a candidate to meet the environmental demands, while making meaningful contributions to the campus are encompassed in the CRP tenets. The CRP tenet, academic achievement, requires a candidate to inspire students to achieve regardless of their circumstances. The CRP tenet, academic achievement requires teachers to set high expectations and strengthen students' reading, writing and problem-solving abilities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Principals identified academic achievement, the CRP tenet that most relates to P-J fit, as a top priority as teachers must ensure that all students, including unique groups of students, such as English Language Learners, meet grade level and state standards. Principals prioritize teachers who can effectively manage a class and implement a student-centered classroom that engages students in the curriculum.

School district should sculpt hiring processes and selection models based on this value, which encompasses P-J fit and the CRP tenet, academic achievement. Centralized staff must have a deep understanding of the skills necessary to produce high academic achievement. Developing this understanding will require centralized staff to be more present on campus and to increase targeted conversations with principals. Conversations must be focused on specific traits and methods to assess P-J fit and the CRP tenet, academic achievement. Screening processes must then be revamped to get to the heart of surveying for these respective skills.

This study highlights principals' beliefs that teachers' cultural competence, their ability to relate to their student population and make cultural connections as essential to P-E fit. Central staff participants acknowledged that with Arborman School District's dynamics and various cultures, cultural competency is critical to teacher success. Essential to P-E fit, is the candidate's

ability to embrace student culture and prior knowledge to the instructional content. Principals expressed a value in teachers who can relate to their student population. Principals desired teachers who were able to understand students' background and potential, even if the teacher had a different upbringing. The significance of cultural competence is undeniable for urban teachers, but the screening processes for this CRP tenet and P-E fit tenet are minimally evaluated, especially at the centralized level. Cultural competence is arguably the most important skill teachers need, but the district's process vaguely assesses a teacher based on a history of working in diverse communities, rather than the specific cultural skills necessary to meet the unique needs of urban students. Districts must demonstrate intentionality and apply true cultural competence metrics to the selection model, whether in the form of a screener or interview protocols geared towards the assessment of cultural competence.

The study's findings indicate that sociopolitical consciousness, "the ability to help students recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 476), is rarely assessed in the district's hiring processes. Principals indicated that they found value in candidates with the potential to involve students in taking action against injustice. However, only two campus-based interview questions connected to community, but the interview questions did not make connections to social justice. There is a direct misalignment between the principals' communicated sociopolitical consciousness value and the evidence of the value in campus-based hiring processes. There was no evidence that sociopolitical consciousness is evaluated in the district's centralized processes. The lack of sociopolitical consciousness in processes indicates the tenet may not be seen as valuable, or there is not a clear way to evaluate this particular tenet, which is critical to helping "students use the various skills they learn to better understand and critique their social position and context" (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 37).

Sociopolitical consciousness “is about the micro-, meso-, and macro-level matters that have a bearing on teachers’ and students’ lived experiences and educational interactions” (Milner, 2011, p. 71). Sociopolitical consciousness, the curricular incorporation and centralization of local realities, is vitally important for students and must be treated as such during the hiring processes.

Person-organization (P-O) fit, “the compatibility of employees with the culture and values of the organization” (Bishop et al., 2011, p. 584), also emerged as difficult to evaluate. In this study, the P-O fit was difficult to evaluate because the district did not have key beliefs that could be articulated. This finding is problematic and a direct contradiction to researched best practices and rationale for making sound P-O fit hires. Existing research supports the idea that recruitment and hiring strategies should be founded on the district’s key beliefs and goals. Research indicates that a strong P-O fit is strongly related to employee commitment to goal attainment (Ellis et al., 2017). Establishing hiring practices that are founded upon district values and beliefs is a necessary practice, as the “teacher hiring process should present multiple opportunities for the candidate and interviewer to exchange information. Principals assess how well the candidate matches the culture and values of the school he or she wish to join, especially in high-needs schools” (p. 454).

As supported by existing literature, person-group fit, “the interpersonal compatibility between individuals and their work groups” (Kristoff-Brown et al., 2005, p. 286), is typically examined at the campus-level. In a traditional company, the P-G fit may be applied exclusively to a candidate’s fit with potential co-workers; but in education, the findings reveal that a person’s compatibility with students is even more important. In this study, principals explicitly communicated that their campus processes accounted for a candidate’s P-G fit with staff, and the processes implicitly accounts for P-G fit with students. Some principals probed about personality

traits, work ethic and pet peeves to determine how candidates would complement their current staff. Principals also gauged whether candidates could relate to their student population.

Principals sought candidates that could understand students' experiences, regardless of whether the experiences were reflective of the candidate's own experiences. Principals' value of P-G fit may be explained by existing literature which communicates that P-G fit makes a meaningful difference, and "over time it is fit on deep-level characteristics...such as values or goals...that has the greatest impact on outcomes" (p. 287). The centralized hiring practices did not account for P-G fit related to staff.

Recruitment and Staffing Remedies

The human resources department utilizes processes that align with research, in which prior performance data is used during the hiring process. The centralized office does incorporate prior performance in the screening process, by having candidates provide past student achievement data. However, there is little indication, if any, that principals are utilizing this information or asking for evidence of a candidate's prior success. Principals' primary method of assessing a candidate's record of prior success and potential for future success is by asking questions about a candidate's success with past lessons, 'aha' moments with students, and classroom management. With the increased focus on student achievement, recent literature reflects the importance of solid evidence incorporation in both centralized and decentralized hiring processes (Cohen-Vogel, 2011; Cannata et al., 2017). Central offices and principals must align on the value of this evidence and what constitutes evidence of potential candidate success.

Implications for Practice

Need for Alignment

There is a lack of understanding between principals and the human resources department related to hiring resources and support. Arborman School District's human resources department thoughtfully collects various data points believed to be valuable in helping principals make informed decisions. They also provide resources that are not known to principals or understood. For instance, they gather information regarding a candidate's previous performance as proven by past student achievement results. Candidates submit a pre-work assignment that illustrates their action planning, intervention and responsiveness to feedback skills. They also ask about a candidate's experience working with diverse communities along with the candidate's EPI score. The intention of these data points is to help principals spark conversation regarding pre-work or past experiences. Principals provided little indication that these screening components were utilized in their hiring processes. Principals were unaware of how candidates were ranked. Two principals made assumptions about a candidate's EPI score but admitted that that they were unfamiliar with the Teacher Match EPI. Principals did not make mention of utilizing the pre-work that candidates completed.

The lack of utilization and understanding of these tools indicates a need for training that familiarizes principals with the available hiring resources. Specifically, principals need to understand centralized processes, including the process rationale, selection model resources and recruitment support. Training must encompass information about the Teacher Match EPI assessment. The EPI is an essential component of the central staff screening process and could be a valuable resource in helping principals to assess a candidate's P-E fit. Training should include an overview of the assessed qualities, sample questions and research that guides EPI.

The study's findings indicate an opportunity for districts to build campus-based selection model capacity and integrate the data points provided by human resources. Along with teaching principals about centralized processes, it is vital to demonstrate to principals how these resources can supplement or guide their campus-based processes. For example, principals can be taught how to use the application data points to develop questions. The pre-work assignment could generate questions about a teacher's choice regarding interventions. Using the pre-work, principals could ask candidates probing questions about how to differentiate interventions for varying levels of performance. The EPI results could be used to produce questions that allow the campus principal and interview panel to dig deeper to explore attitudinal factors and pedagogical knowledge, which can both be critical in determining a person's P-E fit. Districts must provide selection model training that includes specific processes related to marketing the campus for recruitment purposes, hiring, training an interview panel, developing a multi-step process for attaining candidate information, and calibrating and selecting a final candidate. Additionally, selection model training must include support structures, both face-to-face and digital, that allow principals to follow up and receive support as they develop, review and refine their processes.

Moreover, research participants indicated that there are unique needs in the southern sector of Arborman School District. Participants cited that there are schools in the district that are more challenging and could largely benefit from the influence of intentional CRP and fit theory based hiring. While the Arborman's current practices tier recruitment support, the screening and hiring processes are the same for all candidates. There is an opportunity for the district to tailor practices and support structures to more closely match the CRP needs of respective schools. It is essential that districts conduct campus case studies to understand the campus context, the instructional needs, social dynamics, and available campus supports. Once contextual

understanding is in place, districts can tailor practices. These tailored practices could look a variety of ways and include campus marketing based on CRP, specialized screeners and questions for high needs campuses and special hiring tracks for campuses with unique circumstances.

Principals as Key Drivers of Human Capital Decisions

As Bishop et al. (2011) reported, principals are viewed as the most effective at establishing fit for their campus, especially as it relates to P-E fit and P-G fit. According to Bishop et al., “Hiring and evaluating teachers occurs with the organizational context of each school” (p. 584). This fact was echoed in the findings of this study. Arborman School District’s human resources team is only able to conduct high-level screening, while principals have the context to assess candidates as it relates to campus needs, visions and staff members. Existing literature discusses two-tier selection models that specify the functions of district human resource teams as initial screeners or brokers of information (Cannata et al, 2017; Liu et al., 2006) and principals as hiring managers, but this research study adds further commentary on the fallacies in that process. According to Cannata et al. (2017), “Principals perceive the excessive centralization of the hiring process and bureaucratic requirements...as significant barriers to their hiring” (p. 184). This research study highlights the need for principals to be primary drivers of the human resources recruitment and hiring practices. This research study also focuses on the need for districts to prioritize and establish a vision for CRP/fit theory based hiring. Findings also indicate a need to increase resource allocation for central employees who can create more rigorous vetting processes and train principals on resources and hiring theories.

Response data from centralized and decentralized employees revealed that the human resources department is limited in its capabilities due to the manpower needed to screen candidates as thoroughly as campus administrators can. Both centralized and decentralized participants understand the advantage that principals have in determining fit; hence, principals should be key drivers and influencers of district recruitment and selection model. Principals' insight is essential to improving the selection model as they understand the specific P-J, P-O, P-G and P-E fits of campuses. With principals' contextual knowledge, they are a critical voice in understanding the skills necessary for success in an urban district and the level of cultural competence necessary to build meaningful relationships with students and make connections to students' backgrounds. Principals identified the ability to implement a student-centered classroom, the ability to change curriculum based on critical reflection and student input, and the ability to involve students in taking action against injustice as highly valued CRP traits considered when hiring teachers. Principals have the unique lens to understand how these traits manifest on a campus and the best screening methods to assess CRP traits. Ingle et al. (2011), explained principals understand school demographics, the community, and policy pressures, all of which could be critical in the development and revision of the district's selection model.

With the district's advanced data analysis processes, it would behoove the district to analyze hiring practices of principals with high retention rates of newly hired teachers and effective school cultures. Highly successful principals' need to be at the forefront of sharing the knowledge and practices. This is a unique group that could be influential in changing the hiring processes of less effective principals. Principals must be allowed to influence the processes through focus groups, in which they review available data and specify additional data sources that would aid in a more informed and data-rich process. Principals can also learn about and

evaluate various candidate screeners to share insight about which screeners best assess the fit theory and CRP tenets that they have deemed most important. The human resources department and principals can partner to create hiring toolkits that can help equip principals with interview questions, interview rubrics, classroom observation rubrics with follow up questions, feedback protocols and scoring models.

Implications for Policy

CRP Strand in Selection Models

This study's findings imply that there is a need for a CRP strand in selection models in urban schools. This policy modification would require districts to embed a strand in their hiring models that requires teachers to demonstrate their CRP capacity. At the central level, processes could include screeners in the form of assessments, essay questions or equity and CRP based pre-work. The CRP candidate information collected could be vital in driving conversations between the human resources department and principals. Rather than a conversation that focuses only on content area certification, there could be a pivotal change that focuses conversations on a candidate's intrinsic traits. CRP teacher capacity and CRP impact on student achievement would be key components of the conversation.

In addition to a central staff CRP strand, a CRP hiring strand should be required for decentralized, campus-level processes. Each campus principal must assess campus equity and cultural relevancy issues related to hiring and instructional practices. To understand the potential impact of CRP and the value to students, principals must purposefully evaluate the cultural pulse of their campuses. The campus based required CRP stand could require specific interview questions, CRP artifact submission or a CRP rubric to analyze candidates throughout the

interview. There are various options for including this strand; but to elicit a significant difference in hiring practices, the value of CRP must be acknowledged by the district, set as a priority and etched into hiring policies.

Educational Leadership Education

Texas Education Code 149.2001 establishes the expectations and standards for effective administrators. TEC 149.2001 states that effective administrators “are strategic in selecting and hiring candidates whose vision aligns with the school's vision and whose skills match the school's needs” (Texas Education Agency, 2014). TEC 149.2001 recognizes “targeted selection, placement and retention” as an indicator of a principal’s expertise in managing a campus’ human capital. With this standard in mind, this study highlights the need for the examination and modification of educational leadership program curriculum related to staffing schools.

TEC 149.2001 demands for principals to be in tune with the needs of their campus and to be strategic in recruitment and hiring decisions. Based on this study and existing literature, the consensus for the type of culturally responsive teacher necessary for urban schools is resounding (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Urban schools require a teacher who is committed, knowledgeable, growth minded, culturally competent, capable of setting high expectations and able to persevere in challenging situations. Principals must be trained in how to assess and determine the best candidate for the unique needs of the student population and campus culture. This inevitably requires CRP training and fit theory training. Educational leadership programs and districts have an obligation to be more intentional when teaching the necessary knowledge and skills that will allow principals to practice smart recruiting, development and retention. This intentionality requires having educational leadership principal candidates and new principals

study CRP and fit theory in depth, understand the value in selection model components, create hiring models for various campus needs and situations, and employ the support of central office in recruitment and hiring decisions.

Implications for Future Research

CRP-Based Hiring and Performance

This study has implications regarding the potential impact of CRP based hiring practices and teacher performance. Districts have the opportunity to explore retooling their hiring practices to be more reflective of the CRP tenets and fit theory, with an intentional focus on P-J, P-E, cultural competence, and academic achievement, the tenets most valued by principals. The performance of teachers who are hired using retooled hiring practices can be monitored to explore the impact of CRP hiring on teacher performance. Explorations can extend beyond standardized test scores and seek to understand the potential effect on students' self-efficacy, teachers' cultural competence, and instructional practices. Connections can be made to the CRP hiring standards to determine how CRP tenets manifest in the classroom.

Culturally Proficient Principals' Practices

While the focus of this study was not the cultural proficiency of principals, another area for future exploration is the hiring practices of culturally proficient principals. Examining principals who are on the higher levels of the culturally proficient continuum (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009) could disclose if culturally proficient principals have unique and proven ways of screening for a candidate's CRP capacity. The information gathered could be used to train new principals, principals of high needs schools, and principals who have a history of unsuccessful hiring

practices. Further exploring this topic could help principals identify gaps in their practices based on bias, fit theory and CRP tenets.

MTCS in Hiring and Professional Development

Another area for future discoveries is related to the use of the Multicultural Teacher Capacity Scale (Cain, 2015) or a similar cultural proficiency scale as a foundation for hiring and professional development. The MTCS, a self-assessment tool that gauges a teacher's multicultural capacity based upon dispositions, knowledge and skills, could be essential in grounding CRP based hiring research, aligning hiring processes, and creating professional development plans for candidates who are hired. The MTCS tool examines a teacher's dispositions, specifically, the teacher's ability to be socioculturally aware, affirm students' cultural assets, be committed to students' success and act as agents of change. The MTCS tool also measures a teacher's knowledge related to understanding the sociopolitical school context, being aware of the impact of context and culture and demonstrating knowledge of the school and student community. The MTCS assesses a teacher's skill level as it relates to creating a classroom that embraces students, engaging in practice related reflection, fostering students' sociopolitical consciousness and modifying the curriculum to address equity (Cain, 2015).

Hiring screeners, decentralized questions, and a rubric based on MTCS could allow principals to learn about where the candidate falls on the MTCS and decide the candidate's potential for meeting the CRP needs of the campus' students. There is opportunity to explore having the candidate rate himself or herself on the MTCS continuum in the screening process. This self-assessment could have follow up questions associated with candidates based on their multicultural continuum level: nascent, emerging, progressing, advancing and transformation.

Cain describes the nascent level teacher as having “not yet acquired the disposition, knowledge or skills” (p. 175), while the emergent teacher is “developing an awareness, which then becomes acknowledgement at the progressing level” (p.175). A teacher’s social action efforts become evident at the advancing level, and the efforts are sustained at the transformational level.

According to Cain, the goal of the MTCS is for teachers to reflect and “develop an awareness of their current level and the subsequent level present areas to work toward” (p. 175). The self-assessment has implications for a candidate’s personalized professional development in the area of cultural responsiveness and building CRP capacity.

Conclusion

This qualitative study explored the hiring practices of an urban district to understand the roles of fit theory and CRP tenets. It was the goal of this study to add to the current body of research by extending this research beyond the fit theory. My goal in this study was to understand the influence and implications of using the fit theory and CRP tenets to identify the best fit teacher for an urban school district.

An implication of this study is that central office, principals and policymakers should review and modify processes. Clear alignment and communication between central offices and principals is a non-negotiable. In the absence of alignment, principals miss opportunities to understand and maximize the available resources. Central offices miss the opportunity to allow principals to drive the conversations about specific campus needs, the type of teacher that is a best fit, and potential areas of professional development for principals.

Implications regarding principal preparation programs and intentionality related to hiring curriculums that are reflective of Fit and CRP emerged. There is room for exploration of

the performance of teachers hired using CRP/ Fit based hiring and to determine possible impacts of CRP based hiring. There is also an opportunity to explore the use of the MTCS as a foundation for a screener and roadmap for CRP based professional development.

The realities of urban schools are challenging and quite honestly require a teacher who can be successful in spite of obstacles, a teacher who is a champion for students, a teacher who can examine their own culture and the culture of their students, a teacher who realizes that students can be inspired, and a teacher who will not rest until students are successful. With these known realities, it is the duty of central offices, principals and policy makers to ensure recruitment and hiring practices are strategically targeting the culturally responsive teachers our students so desperately need.

APPENDIX A

THE MULTICULTURAL TEACHER CAPACITY SCALE

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Background: Although multicultural is a common term used in education, it is often used in inconsistent and superficial ways. In this context, multicultural education refers to a school-based reform movement and a multicultural teacher is one who has the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to promote educational equity in their classrooms, schools, and ultimately society. Acknowledging that teachers are not simply multicultural or not, multicultural teacher capacity describes the *extent* to which teachers feel that they are multicultural.

Description: The *Multicultural Teacher Capacity Scale* (MTCS) is a self-assessment tool designed to capture the extent to which teachers feel that they are multicultural as outlined by the included characteristics. Teachers reflect on the 11 multicultural characteristics as they are described along a continuum of levels. The MTCS is designed for formative use to better understand where teachers fall on the continuum and to then seek ways to promote growth. As depicted in the model below, multicultural teacher capacity is organized into three domains: dispositions, knowledge, and skills. Dispositions are the values, attitudes, and beliefs that shape how teachers interpret knowledge and apply skills. The next layer is knowledge, which is the information that is used to inform the skills. Skills describe teaching practices and what teachers do inside and outside of the classroom. Domains are the organizing categories and within each is a set of characteristics. Each characteristic is described along a continuum of five levels: nascent, emerging, progressing, advancing, and transformational. The goal is for everyone to find a place on the continuum. At the nascent level, teachers have not yet acquired the disposition, knowledge, or skill. At the emerging level, the teachers are developing an awareness, which then becomes acknowledgement at the progressing level. Social action begins at the advancing level and is intentional and sustained at the transformational level. The ultimate goal is for teachers to be intentionally engaged in social action that leads to long-lasting changes in their classrooms and beyond. By reflecting on their multicultural characteristics, teachers develop an awareness of their current level and the subsequent level present areas to work toward. This tool has implications for teacher education programs, teacher educators, teachers, and administrators who are committed to educational equity.

Instructions: To identify their respective levels, teachers review each characteristic and reflect on the descriptors beginning with nascent and continuing to the subsequent level until they reach a point where they do not meet the criteria listed. Levels are cumulative. As such, each descriptor under the levels must be met in order to progress to the subsequent level. It can be overwhelming to focus on 11 characteristics, therefore after reflecting on each characteristic emphasis should be placed on 1-3 at a time..

Dispositions

Socioculturally aware

Affirm students' cultural

Committed to students'

Agent of change

Knowledge

Understand the sociopolitical
context of schools

Understand the impact of
context and culture

Demonstrate experiential
knowledge of the school and the
students' communities

Skills

Create a classroom
that embraces
students

Engage in critical
reflection to guide
practice

Foster the sociopolitical
consciousness of
students

Modify curriculum and
pedagogy to confront
issues of equity

Characteristics	Nascent	Emerging	Progressing	Advancing	Transformational
<p>1. Are Socioculturally Aware</p> <p><i>Multicultural teachers understand the sociopolitical* context that shapes their identity and experiences.</i></p> <p><i>(*Sociopolitical refers to the laws, regulations, policies, practices, traditions, ideologies, and beliefs)</i></p>	<p>I have not yet examined factors such as my race, ethnicity, social class, religion, sexual orientation, language, geographic location, etc.</p> <p>I do not yet understand how my culture (or values, thoughts, actions, experiences and beliefs) are deeply influenced by factors such as my race, ethnicity, social class, religion, sexual orientation, language, etc.</p>	<p>I examine how factors such as my race, ethnicity, social class, religion, sexual orientation, language, geographic location, etc. influence how I experience world.</p> <p>I understand how my culture (or values, traditions, thoughts, actions, experiences and beliefs) are deeply influenced by factors such as my race, ethnicity, social class, religion, sexual orientation, language, etc.</p>	<p>I recognize that the United States is a stratified society and that some experiences and identities are valued more and therefore privileged over others.</p> <p>I recognize that my values, thoughts, beliefs, and actions are not neutral but instead are influenced by the social and political context.</p>	<p>I am aware of my identity and experiences in relation to others and can articulate ways in which I have been privileged or marginalized based on my identification with those factors.</p> <p>I examine how my identity and experiences shape my perspective and recognize that my perspective (i.e., how I understand situations, how I define good, etc.) is neither universal or “right,” but cultural and contextual.</p> <p>I have a community where I can discuss and challenge issues of identity, experiences, and perspectives.</p>	<p>I critically examine my thoughts, beliefs, and actions to identify biases and limitations.</p> <p>I constantly challenge myself to be aware of and to understand situations from multiple perspectives and points of view (e.g., definitions of parent involvement).</p> <p>I constantly engage in critical conversations with a community where we discuss and challenge issues of identity, experiences, and perspectives.</p>
2. Affirm students' cultural assets	I do not yet understand that all students have cultural capital (i.e., knowledge, skills, and	I understand that all students have cultural capital (i.e., knowledge, skills, and talents) that is	I understand that there is a dominant cultural capital (i.e., knowledge, skills, and talents) that	While I understand that my students have cultural capital (i.e., knowledge, skills, and	I explicitly discuss dominant and marginalized capital so that my students

Characteristics	Nascent	Emerging	Progressing	Advancing	Transformational
<i>Multicultural teachers recognize students' cultural capital and the need to access dominant cultural capital to navigate inequitable systems.</i>	talents) that is valuable in the classroom. I do not yet seek ways to identify the cultural capital that all of my students bring.	valuable in the classroom. I intentionally seek ways to identify the cultural capital (i.e., knowledge, skills, and talents) that all of my students bring.	my students are expected to acquire in order to navigate society that may differ from their own. I create opportunities for all students to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and talents in the classroom, school, or community.	talents), I also understand that all cultural capital is not valued equally in society. I am able to identify the capital (i.e., knowledge, skills, and talents) needed to navigate society (e.g., curriculum standards, Standard American English, computer literacy, etc.).	understand how to navigate inequitable systems and maintain their own cultural capital. I intentionally provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their cultural capital through content-aligned assignments and assessments.
3. Committed to students' success <i>Multicultural teachers have high expectations of students because they see them as capable learners.</i>	I care about my students, but do not yet believe that I have the tools to help them all be successful. I do not yet understand student failure beyond their circumstances (i.e., SES, language ability, exceptionality, etc.). I do not yet define success more broadly than performance on standardized tests.	I care about my students and believe that I have the tools to help them all be successful. I see my students as capable of success and do believe that their circumstances (i.e., SES, language ability, exceptionality, etc.) determine their failure. I define success more broadly than performance on standardized test.	I believe that it is my responsibility to ensure that all of my students are successful in my classroom. I recognize that some students are dependent on the school in order to meet traditional societal demands (i.e., high school completion) so I strive to help them to help them navigate inequitable systems.	I see my role as equipping and empowering my students for long-term success beyond my classroom. I examine the factors (<i>individual, institutional, and structural</i>) that are in place that create failure for some students (e.g., standardized testing, school funding, school policies, tracking, etc.).	I communicate through words and actions that students can be successful in spite of their circumstances. I actively challenge factors that are in place that create failure for some students. I demonstrate my high expectations for students by employing strategies to ensure that all have access to a rigorous curriculum.

Characteristics	Nascent	Emerging	Progressing	Advancing	Transformational
			I communicate to my students the various (and may be competing) definitions of success.	I provide opportunities for my students to demonstrate success in a variety of ways, while also helping them meet mainstream markers of success.	I ensure that my students believe that they are capable of success.
<p>4. Agents of change</p> <p><i>Multicultural teachers understand and take action to confront issues of inequity and injustice in their classrooms and beyond</i></p>	I do not yet understand the terms related to multicultural at the basic level (e.g., culture, equity, equality, oppression, prejudice, privilege, ideology, socialization social justice, power, etc.).	I understand terms related to multicultural education at the basic level and am able to apply them in context (e.g., culture, equity, equality, oppression, prejudice, privilege, ideology, socialization social justice, power, etc.).	<p>I apply and recognize these terms within the school and societal context.</p> <p>I am conscious of the ways in which interpersonal discrimination can play out in my classroom (e.g., subtle and blatant derogatory comments).</p>	<p>I respond to instances of bias, discrimination, and inequity of within my classroom and school (a short-term level).</p> <p>I am conscious of the ways in which institutional discrimination can play out in my school (e.g., discipline targeting certain students, English only policies).</p>	<p>I take action and advocate on behalf of (or with) my students to challenge bias, discrimination and inequities (e.g., not comply with school policies that lead to inequitable outcomes and/or experiences for students)</p> <p>I recognize that students can be agents of change and seek to raise their awareness of issues of inequity.</p>
<p>5. Understand the sociopolitical context of schools</p> <p><i>Multicultural teachers know how</i></p>	I do not yet watch the news on a regular basis and nor do I feel that I am up-to-date with local and national events.	I watch the news on a regular basis and feel that I am up-to-date with local and national events.	I consider whose voices are dominant and whose voices are marginalized in mainstream media.	<p>I recognize that teaching is a political act.</p> <p>I am conscious of the impact of local and</p>	I actively participate in decision-making at a school, community, and/or national level (i.e., school board, hiring

Characteristics	Nascent	Emerging	Progressing	Advancing	Transformational
<i>social, political, and economic factors in the society and community impact their students and schools.</i>	I am not yet familiar with current educational policies that impact my profession and the students in my classroom (e.g., professional contract, legal rights of students, IEP process, etc.).	I am familiar with current educational policies that impact my profession and the students in my classroom (e.g., professional contract, legal rights of students, IEP process, etc.).	I intentionally seek varied media outlets to gain a wider perspective on local and national events. I understand how policies are made (i.e., decision makers, power brokers, stake holders, underlying factors, etc.).	national events on schools and students. I am conscious of and communicate the impact of policies on schools and students. I am aware of the ways in which I can take action to impact my classroom and/or school.	committee, department chair, etc.) to advocate on behalf of my students and/or their communities. I involve my students, colleagues, and/or administrators in taking action.
6. Understand the impact of context and culture on students <i>Multicultural teachers understand the historical and contemporary role of culture and cultural difference and their impact on school related experiences and outcomes.</i>	I am not yet aware of the histories, struggles, and, accomplishments of various groups (e.g., related to race, ethnicity, gender, SES, sexual orientation, religion, etc.) beyond dates and facts.	I am aware of the histories, struggles, and, accomplishments of various groups beyond dates and facts (e.g., related to race, ethnicity, gender, SES, sexual orientation, religion, etc.) to understand the underlying factors (e.g., motivation, impact, consequences, etc.).	I make connections between the historical and contemporary context of various groups. I seek to understand the histories, struggles, and, accomplishments of various groups and their impact on my students' school-related experiences and outcomes (e.g., related to race, ethnicity, gender, SES, sexual orientation, religion, etc.).	I critically analyze issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, socio economic status, sexual orientation, and religion and recognize how they shape the learning experience and outcomes for my students. I can identify the ways in which some cultural factors and groups are privileged or marginalized in schools (and society) through	I challenge the negative impact these factors have on my students' outcomes and experiences. I help my students understand the ways that some cultural factors and groups are privileged or marginalized in schools and include them in opportunities to respond.

Characteristics	Nascent	Emerging	Progressing	Advancing	Transformational
				curriculum, policies, and/or practices.	
<p>7. Demonstrate experiential knowledge of school and students' communities</p> <p><i>Multicultural teachers understand their relationship with and resources within the community.</i></p>	<p>I do not yet believe that it is important to experience my school and/or students' communities.</p> <p>I do not yet see the students' and school's communities as a classroom resource.</p>	<p>I believe it is important to experience my school and/or students' communities.</p> <p>I see the students' and school's communities as a classroom resource.</p>	<p>I have authentic experiences in my students' and school's communities (e.g., attend events, shop, etc.).</p> <p>I intentionally seek opportunities to learn about resources within the community.</p>	<p>I critically reflect on my experiences and interactions within the communities to challenge assumptions.</p> <p>I seek ways to connect the community to my classroom and my classroom to the community.</p>	<p>I am actively involved in the community: I have sustained relationships with community members.</p> <p>I intentionally connect the community to my classroom, and my classroom to the community.</p>
<p>8. Create a classroom community that embraces students</p> <p><i>Multicultural teachers share power with students to construct a student-centered environment where students are active members.</i></p>	<p>I do not yet utilize student input/voice to guide classroom management, engagement, and curriculum.</p> <p>I do not yet aim to create a classroom where students feel responsible for each other.</p>	<p>I value my students' input/voice regarding classroom management, engagement, and curriculum.</p> <p>I aim to create a classroom where students feel responsible for each other.</p>	<p>I seek student input/voice regarding classroom management, engagement, and/or curriculum.</p> <p>I am aware of and implement community-building strategies in my classroom.</p>	<p>I use input from students regarding classroom management, engagement, and curriculum.</p> <p>I reflect on how student voices are affirmed and respected within my classroom.</p>	<p>My classroom is student-centered as demonstrated through their active role in developing classroom management, engagement, and curriculum.</p> <p>I seek student feedback to ensure that they feel a sense of community in the classroom.</p>

Characteristics	Nascent	Emerging	Progressing	Advancing	Transformational
<p>9. Engage in critical reflection to guide practice</p> <p><i>Multicultural teachers critically self-reflect and seek student feedback to become aware of and address biases that can lead to inequitable experiences and outcomes for students.</i></p>	<p>I do not yet understand how my values, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs are transmitted through what and how I teach.</p> <p>I am not yet aware that the choices in what and how I teach can lead to inequitable experiences and outcomes for my students.</p> <p>I do not yet understand and can distinguish deficit-based perspectives from asset-based perspectives.</p>	<p>I acknowledge that my teaching is not neutral; I understand that my values, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs are transmitted through what and how I teach.</p> <p>I am aware that the choices in what and how I teach can lead to inequitable experiences and outcomes for my students.</p> <p>I understand and can distinguish deficit-based perspectives from asset-based perspectives.</p>	<p>I seek to better understand the impact of what and how I teach on my students' school-related experiences and outcomes.</p> <p>I intentionally reflect on my pedagogical and curricular choices to uncover implicit or explicit bias.</p> <p>I can identify deficit- and asset-based thinking in my own pedagogical and curricular choices.</p>	<p>I can explain the rationale (<i>beyond professional requirements</i>) behind my pedagogical and curricular choices.</p> <p>I constantly reflect on my pedagogical and curricular choices to uncover implicit and explicit bias and deficit-based thinking.</p> <p>I seek ways to change my pedagogy and curriculum based on my critical reflections.</p>	<p>I can explain the rationale, (<i>beyond professional requirements</i>), objectives, and sociopolitical implications of my pedagogical and curricular choices.</p> <p>I constantly seek student feedback related to issues of equitable experiences and outcomes in my classroom.</p> <p>I change my pedagogy and curriculum based on my own critical reflections and/or students' input.</p>
<p>10. Foster the sociopolitical consciousness of students</p> <p><i>Multicultural teachers facilitate the development</i></p>	<p>I do not yet provide opportunities for my student to discuss issues of equity that impact them, their community and/or society.</p>	<p>I provide teacher-directed opportunities for my students to discuss issues of inequity that impact them, their community, and/or society.</p>	<p>I facilitate my students' understanding of issues of equity and how it affects them and/or their community.</p>	<p>I facilitate action-oriented projects with my students related to issues of inequity that impact them, their community, or society.</p>	<p>My students develop and lead action-oriented projects related to an issue that they identify.</p> <p>My students demonstrate an understanding of issues</p>

Characteristics	Nascent	Emerging	Progressing	Advancing	Transformational
<i>of students who are aware of issues of equity and take action.</i>				My students can communicate how issues of inequity impact them and their community.	of inequity related to them, their community and/or society.
<p>11. Modify curriculum and pedagogy to confront issues of equity</p> <p><i>Multicultural teachers are aware that traditional curriculum marginalizes some students while privileging others.</i></p>	I do not yet consider my content area as a vehicle to examine issues of equity related to my students and their communities.	I see my content area as a vehicle to examine issues of equity related to my students, their communities, and/or society.	<p>I seek opportunities in my curriculum to teach through an equity lens where students engage in content-aligned opportunities to examine issues of inequity (i.e., additive model of isolated activities or lessons).</p> <p>I consciously select curricular resources that challenge issues of inequity and/or include voices/perspectives that are marginalized in curriculum.</p>	<p>I analyze my curriculum to ensure that it meets content standards, includes varied perspectives, and opportunities for my students to become critical consumers of knowledge (i.e., embedded model leading towards transformation of curriculum).</p> <p>I model critical analysis of curriculum and text with students through a discussion of whom and what is privileged in curriculum.</p>	<p>Based on my analysis, I modify (or design) curriculum that meets content standards, includes varied perspectives, and provides opportunities for my students to become critical consumers of knowledge (i.e., implementing a transformed curriculum).</p> <p>My students play an active role in curricular decision-making to ensure that it is relevant and reflects their realities.</p>

APPENDIX B
PERMISSIONS

RE: Permission to Use Instrument



CAIN, JESSIE <CAINJM@mailbox.sc.edu>
Mon 4/24, 8:07 AM
Winn, Takesha L ✉



Reply all | ▾



Action Items



Hi Takesha,

First of all, congratulations on this major milestone...you are done with coursework and the training wheels are off! ☺ Your study sounds fascinating and speaks to the gatekeeping that happens in major institutions. If we really believe in this work and want it to live outside of the confines of a mission statement or "diversity" clause it has to be evident and explicit in our practices, such as hiring and recruiting. Yes, you have my permission to use the instrument to guide your instrument develop.

Please keep me posted on your progress, I would love to read your dissertation. And, if I can be of any help, please do not hesitate to reach out (and no, I am not just saying that).

All the best,
M.

J. Montana **Cain**, PhD
Research Associate
[Office of Program Evaluation](#)
[University of South Carolina](#)

RE: Permission to Use Instrument



CAIN, MONTANA <CAINJM@mailbox.sc.edu>
Today, 3:39 PM
Winn, Takesha L ✉



Reply all | ▾

Hi Dr. Winn,

Congratulations! That is exciting. Yes, you have my permission to include the protocol in the appendix of your dissertation as long as the copyright and contact information are also included.

I believe you have an older version, can you update the email to jessiemontanacain@gmail.com if not already included. With that change, if necessary, you can append.

I hope you make time to celebrate this major accomplishment! :)

Love and light,
M.

J. Montana Cain, PhD

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD INFORMED
CONSENT FORM

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose, benefits and risks of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: Culturally Relevant Recruitment and Hiring Practices of an Urban District

Student Investigator: Takesha Winn, University of North Texas (UNT)

Department of Education. **Supervising Investigator:** Dr. Miriam Ezzani, University of North Texas.

Purpose of the Study: You are being asked to participate in a research study which involves exploring the recruitment hiring practices of an urban district. The intent is to specifically evaluate the inclusion of the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy. Fit theory encompasses person-job fit, person-organization fit, person-environment fit, and person-group fit (Kristoff-Brown et al., 2005). Culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994) consists of the following tenets: high academic expectations, sociopolitical consciousness and cultural competence. The research seeks to identify applications and implications of the aforementioned theories in current centralized and decentralized recruitment and hiring practices.

Study Procedures: You will be asked to spend time interviewing with the student investigator. You will be asked to spend about 30 to 45 minutes answering questions related to your respective role in the district's recruitment and hiring processes. Centralized employees will be asked to submit documents that are related to recruitment and hiring. Decentralized employees (principals) will be asked to submit sample hiring protocols and selection models. The data will be analyzed and compiled into a written document that will be included in this dissertation study as Chapter 4. Participants will receive a written copy of their responses to clarify accuracy. Upon completion of the study, participants will receive a copy of the findings, if requested.

Foreseeable Risks: No foreseeable risks are involved in this study.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: This study is not expected to be of any direct benefit to you, but we hope to learn more about urban district's recruitment and hiring practices in acquiring culturally relevant and best fit teachers. The research findings are expected to contribute to the field of educational leadership by sharing the practices from one urban district's centralized and decentralized practices, which could serve as a reference point for others.

Compensation for Participants: You will receive a gift card as compensation for your participation. The gift card will be given by the student investigator upon the completion of the interview.

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: Each research participant will be given a pseudonym for anonymity purposes. All participants' identifying information, interview responses, and coded survey responses will be kept in a separate location and secured. The confidentiality of your information will be maintained in any publications or presentations regarding this study.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Takesha Winn by phone at (469)563-9944 and by email at winntakesha@my.unt.edu or Miriam Ezzani by phone at (940) 565-2935 and by email at miriam.ezzani@unt.edu.

Review for the Protection of Participants: The research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-4643 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants' Rights:

Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- Takesha Winn has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.
- You understand that you do not have to take part in this study, and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as a research participant and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study
- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX D

CENTRALIZED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I will begin the interview by introducing myself to the participant and explaining the purpose of my study. I will inform the participant that I will use a tape recorder, which will allow me to revisit the interview at a later time for a deeper analysis. I will also explain to the participants that responses will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used to protect his or her privacy. I will also inform the participant that I will make my responses available for review during the member check process, which will allow the participant to clarify his or her responses. I will also inform the interviewee that he or she may ask me to stop the tape if he or she wants to make a comment off tape.

Date and Time of Interview:	Gender:
Interviewee:	Race/Ethnicity:
Pseudonym:	Years in Current Position:
Title in Human Resources:	

Before participating in the interview, the researcher will read portions of the literature review to the research participant to ensure knowledge of the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy.

Interview Questions

1. Please describe your role. (*Background*)

2. Please describe your professional experiences that lead to your role in human resources recruitment and hiring departments. (*Background*)
3. What are your personal beliefs about the qualities necessary for a teacher working in an urban district? (*Background*)
4. Describe your current recruiting strategies. (*Research Question 1*)
5. What guides your decision making as it relates to those recruitment strategies? (*Research Questions 1, 2 and 3*)
6. What is your knowledge about how to establish fit? Probe: How do you determine the fit between the prospective teacher and the campus? (*Research Question 2*)
7. What needs do campuses ask human capital to prioritize as teachers are recruited? Probe: How do principals convey the type of teachers they are seeking for their campus? Do principals ask for specific characteristics in teachers? What are they? (*Research Questions 1 and 2*)
8. What challenges do you experience in recruiting teachers based on these characteristics? (*Research Questions 1 and 2*)
9. What is your familiarity with culturally relevant pedagogy? Probe: What might that look like in the classroom? What difference does it make? How does it make a difference in the academic achievement of diverse student populations? (*Research Question 3*)
10. What challenges do you experience in recruiting Culturally Responsive Teachers? (*Research Questions 1 and 3*)
11. Describe the current teacher selection model. Probe: How would you characterize the effectiveness? (*Research Question 1*)

12. Which dispositions, knowledge and skills does the teacher selection model prioritize?
Probe: What are examples of the questions and rubrics that are used in your selection model? (*Research Question 1*)
13. Explain how the current recruitment, selection and hiring processes assess whether a candidate displays the following characteristics: holds beliefs similar to the organization, possesses the skills to teach urban students, and is equipped to be successful in a challenging or high needs school. (*Research Questions 1 and 3*).
14. Explain how the current recruitment, selection and hiring processes assess whether a candidate is able to: help students achieve academic success, embrace and utilize students' cultures in instructional practices, and question unjust and inequitable systems. (*Research Questions 1 and 2*)
15. What opportunities are there to expand the selection model and hiring practices to be more reflective of specific characteristics that principals are seeking? (*Research Questions 1, 2, and 3*)
16. What opportunities are there to select teachers who are amenable to or familiar with culturally relevant pedagogy? Probe: What changes can the district implement to hire teachers who are culturally relevant? (*Research Questions 1, 2, and 3*)
17. What value do you see in expanding the selection model and hiring practices to be more reflective of the culturally relevant pedagogy tenets (cultural competence, high academic expectations, and sociopolitical consciousness) and fit theory? (*Research Question 4*)

APPENDIX E

DECENTRALIZED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I will begin the interview by introducing myself to the participant and explaining the purpose of my study. I will inform the participant that I will use a tape recorder, which will allow me to revisit the interview at a later time for a deeper analysis. I will also explain to the participants that responses will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used to protect his or her privacy. I will also inform the participant that I will make my responses available for review during the member check process, which will allow the participant to clarify his or her responses. I will also inform the interviewee that he or she may ask me to stop the tape if he or she wants to make a comment off tape.

Date and Time of Interview:	Gender:
Interviewee:	Race/Ethnicity:
Pseudonym:	Years in Current Position:
Years as a Principal:	School Level: Elementary/ Middle/ High

Interview Questions

Before participating in the interview, the researcher will read portions of the literature review to the research participant to ensure knowledge of the fit theory and culturally relevant pedagogy.

1. Please describe your role. (*Background*)

2. Please describe your professional experiences that lead to your role as a campus principal. (*Background*)
3. What are your personal beliefs about the qualities necessary for a teacher working in an urban district. (*Background*)
4. Describe your campus. Probe: Include student demographics, languages spoken, student achievement, specialized programs, etc. (*Background and Question 2*)
5. Describe the culture of your campus. Probe: Include mission, values, visions, parent participation, student pride, etc. (*Background and Research Question 1*)
6. What are the top three teacher traits that you prioritize when recruiting and hiring teachers? Probe: Why do you prioritize these traits over others? (*Research Question 1*)
7. Think about the teaching staff at your campus. If you had to hire a teacher, what attributes would you consider when trying to select a teacher who would be a “fit” with organizational values, staff and environment? (*Research Questions 1 and 2*)
8. Describe your hiring and selection process. Probe: What are the steps? Who is involved and why? (*Research Question 1*)
9. How does the human resources team support your recruitment and hiring processes? (*Research Question 1*)
10. How do you assess the Cultural Relevancy of a potential teaching candidate? (*Research Questions 1 and 3*)

The next few questions require you to prioritize the following teacher characteristics that you consider when hiring. If you do not consider the characteristic, please indicate that it is not a consideration when hiring a teacher. These characteristics are based on the tenets of culturally

relevant pedagogy. The questions below have been adapted from the Multicultural Teacher Capacity Scale (2015).

Academic Achievement

1. Take a moment and think about your hiring practices and what you value in teachers.

Which characteristics are the most important (maximum two characteristics)? Why did you prioritize those characteristics? (*Research Questions 2, 3, and 4*)

- a. Evidence of ability to implement a student-centered classroom (including classroom management, engagement and curriculum)
- b. Belief that students are capable of success
- c. Ensuring students have access to a rigorous curriculum
- d. Communicating that students can be successful in spite of their circumstances

Cultural Competence

2. Take a moment and think about your hiring practices and what you value in teachers.

Which characteristics are the most important (maximum two characteristics)? Why did you prioritize those characteristics? (*Research Questions 2, 3, and 4*)

- a. Actively involved in the community (i.e. Critical community conversations)
- b. Can explain rationale for sociopolitical curricular choices
- c. Ensures equitable experiences and outcomes in classroom
- d. Changes curriculum based on critical reflection and student input
- e. Embraces varied perspectives
- f. Allows students to play an active role in decision-making to ensure relevance and a reflection of realities

Sociopolitical Consciousness

1. Take a moment and think about your hiring practices and what you value in teachers.

Which characteristics are the most important (maximum two characteristics)? Why

did prioritize those characteristics? (*Research Questions 2, 3, and 4*)

- a. Ensures students understand how to navigate inequitable systems
- b. Aligns content and assessments to students' cultural capital
- c. Advocates for students by challenging bias, discrimination and inequities
- d. Involves students in taking action against injustice
- e. Helps students understand privilege and marginalization

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